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## **EMERSON AND HIS FRIENDS**



# EMERSON AND HIS FRIENDS

BY

JABEZ T. SUNDERLAND, A.M., D.D.

A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece  
of nature.—EMERSON

O friend, my bosom said.  
Through thee the sky is arched,  
Through thee the rose is red,  
All things through thee take nobler form  
And look beyond the earth.

EMERSON

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“ He, if any, must have taken the census of the admirable people of his time, numbering as many among his friends as most living Americans; while he is already recognized as the representative mind of his country, to whom distinguished foreigners are especially commended when visiting America.”

A. BRONSON ALCOTT.





## DEDICATION

I take great pleasure in dedicating this book to my daughter, Gertrude Sunderland Safford, whose literary service in connection with its completion has been invaluable.



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## FOREWORD

Our Universities in pursuing the study of English literature often fail to realise that the great continent of America has produced its own literature in English, and that acquaintance with American thought is necessary for our mental equipment. Emerson is sometimes studied, and Whitman is known to us, but our knowledge remains cursory, because it is not linked with the historical and cultural background of the United States.

Dr. Sunderland's book will provide that background and help us in getting a human perspective of the times in which Emerson and his friends lived. Having devoted a great part of his life to the understanding and interpretation of India, the late Dr. Sunderland was able to place his scholarly research in a manner that would suit our students at the Universities and outside. I am glad that he has left this book for India and I hope that its publication will stimulate the study of American literature, which will provide comparative values as also the inspiration of its excellence.



## AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Twenty years after Emerson's death an American critic wrote of him,—“I suspect it would be hard to find a man who has an especially original vein in him—however different from Emerson—who is not indebted to Emerson for it. What his thought does is to bring out the grain in a man.”

Without doubt it was partly this challenging effect of his thought and partly the magnetism and sweetness and spiritual serenity of his personality that attracted to him the brilliant men and women of his time who became his friends. Friendship, with Emerson, was not a sentimental matter but a give and take from the mind and soul. A New England writer who knew him and felt the rare quality of his personality, thus analyzed the effect that Emerson had upon him : “I know of no other man who makes so marvellously real to me the kind of love that outstretches hands. There is no other man who can so flood my days with the realities I never touch, who puts reality into all of one's vast, far comradeships.”

My own acquaintance with Emerson, the man, was slight, as I met him only once, about two years before his death. His quiet



composure,—even when his then failing memory obliged him to turn to his daughter for the name or word he wanted to use in the conversation,—the spiritual quality in his face, illumined now and then by the beautiful smile that so charmed all who knew him, the dignified, unassuming kindliness of his bearing, the quiet wisdom of his words,—all impressed me unforgettably. To meet the man whose writings had already become a stimulus and inspiration to my thinking was a memorable experience. I can understand how great was the privilege of those who enjoyed his friendship.

I have not attempted to include in this volume all of Emerson's friends, which would hardly be possible,—but my aim has been to select the friendships and relationships which seem to me most interesting and most significant.

JABEZ THOMAS SUNDERLAND

## **À FEW SHORT PASSAGES ON FRIENDSHIP FROM EMERSON'S WRITINGS**

"The only way to have a friend is to be one"

*Essay on Friendship*

"A friend is the hope of the heart"

*Essay on Character*

"A man's friends are his magnetisms." *Essay on Fate.*

"We take care of our health; we lay up money; we make our roof tight; and our clothing sufficient But who provides wisely that he shall not be wanting in the best property of all—friends?" *Essay on Conduct of Life.*

"All highest and most enduring friendship must have an element of worship in it" *From his Journal*

"A friend may well be reckoned the masterpiece of nature" *Essay on Friendship*

"A friend is one with whom I can be perfectly sincere"

*Ibid.*

"Better be a nettle in the side of a friend than his echo."

*Ibid.*

"I hate the prostitution of the name of friendship to signify modish and worldly alliances" *Ibid*

"There can never be deep peace between two spirits, never mutual respect, until in their dialogue each stands for the whole world" *Ibid.*

"The essence of friendship is entireness, a total magnanimity and trust" *Ibid*

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?  
Loved the wild-rose and left it on its stalk?  
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?  
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?  
And loved so well a high behavior,  
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,  
Nobility more nobly to repay?"

O, be my friend, and teach me to be thine."

*A poem entitled "Forbearance."*

"Happy is the house that shelters a friend!"

*Essay on Friendship.*

"I awoke this morning with devout thanksgiving for my friends, the old and the new" *Ibid.*

## • INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER ON EMERSON AND THE ORIENT

In 1913, the year before the beginning of the World War, it was the fortune of the present writer to make an extended lecture tour through Japan, China, and India. I was surprised at the number of requests for lectures on Emerson, especially in colleges and universities and before literary societies. On one occasion, after delivering a lecture on this subject before the faculty and students of a prominent college in Tokyo, I was told that for a long time there had been in the college a large and enthusiastic Emerson class, taught by the Principal,—a class which at that time contained more than two hundred members. I found Emerson's works in nearly all the important libraries of the Orient. And among literary men, educators and religious teachers I seldom failed to discover a considerable degree of knowledge of the writings of this American thinker and teacher, and almost invariably a lively interest in his thought. Emerson's writings contain a universal intellectual quality which raises them above all national and continental boundaries; and there is an ethical and spiritual quality in his thought which makes it peculiarly welcome in the Orient.

Several years ago, Principal Heramba Chandra Maitra, of City College, Calcutta, made a visit to America, giving a series of lectures in one of the American Theological Colleges and speaking also in a number of large cities. Before a national conference of Unitarian ministers he read a paper on Emerson which attracted much attention and was published in the *Harvard Theological Review*. In that paper he said : " I recognize a close affinity between the thought of Emerson and that of the Orient. Emerson's teachings breathe a new life into our old faith. They assure its stability and its progress by incorporating with it precious new truths revealed or brought into prominence by the wider intellectual and ethical outlook of the modern spirit."

Emerson never travelled in the Orient and therefore never formed personal friendships there, as he did in Europe. But his interest in that half of the world was very great and he made extensive studies of its best literature and wove much of its thought into his writings.

Even in his childhood the far-off, mysterious countries of Asia kindled his imagination and had a fascination for him, so that he eagerly seized upon such Persian and Indian poetry and such Oriental tales as fell into his hands.

As time went on, this casual reading

changed to serious study. He never became a savant in Oriental lore,—his supreme interest being rather in the ethical and spiritual inspiration he might glean from it to enrich his own thought. After 1840 his Journals and public lectures abound in references to Oriental books and authors,—Mahomet, the Koran, and Abulfeda, of Arabia; Confucius and Mencius, of China; Hafiz, Saadi, the Avesta, and Zoroaster, of Persia; Buddha, Manu, the Vedas, the Upanishads, ~~the~~ Bhagavad Gita, ~~the~~ Puranas, of India; as well as the Jewish and Christian Bible. In all of these he sought and found universal truth, winnowed from the varying experiences of different peoples and cultures. “Can any one doubt,” he asks, “that if the noblest saint among the Buddhists, the noblest Mohammedan, the highest stoic of Athens, the purest and wisest Christian, Confucius in China, Spinoza in Holland, could somewhere meet and converse together, they would all find themselves of one religion?”

Again, he declares : “The Zoroastrian, the Hindu, the Persian scriptures are majestic.——I owed a magnificent day to the Bhagavad Gita. It was the first of books; it was as if an empire spoke to us, nothing small or unworthy, but large, serene, consistent, the voice of an old intelligence which in another age and another climate had

pondered and thus disposed of the same questions which exercise us."

In my extensive travels in the East, I found Emerson generally looked upon, not only as our greatest Western philosophical and religious thinker, but as singularly akin to their own spiritual leaders. After Emerson's death Mr. Protap Chunder Mozoomdar, eminent leader of the Brahmo Samaj, made an extended visit to America, speaking widely in churches and religious conventions. On returning home he published an article entitled "Emerson as seen from India," in which was the following passage :

"I am asked what we in India think of Emerson. . . . . Amidst the ceaseless, sleepless din and clash of Western materialism, the character of Emerson shines upon India serene as the evening star. He seems to some of us to have been born in India. Perhaps Hindus were closer kinsmen to him than his own nation, because every typical Hindu is a child of Nature. All our ancient religion is the utterance of the infinite through Nature's symbolism. . . . . Emerson speaks of his homogeneity with the woods and wilderness. The tranquil landscape and the distant line of the horizon gave him that conception of occult relationship between man and all things, which is the key to the sublime culture known as Yoga in the history of the Hindu philosophy.

“Emerson laid the foundations of the true philosophy of the world by viewing matter not as a soulless succession of appearances, nor yet a creation of the brain of man, but as a mysterious, marvellous putting forth, in outward form of beauty,—of that which he inwardly realizes in the spirit. His writings, too, often recalled to mind the utterances of Hindu philosophy,—that all the universe is a divine dream, passing away, but in passing it reminds us of the meaning, glory, presence, and life which it reveals and conceals..

“Yes, Emerson had all the wisdom and spirituality of the Brahmins. Brahminism is an acquirement, a state of being rather than a creed. In whomsoever the Eternal Brahma breathed his unquenchable fire, he was the Brahmin. And in that sense Emerson was the best of Brahmins.”

Tagore wrote of Emerson : “In Emerson we have a poet and a profoundly religious man, who is really and entirely undaunted by the discoveries of science, past, present and prospective. In his case poetry takes her graver brother by the hand and cheers him with immortal laughter. By Emerson, scientific conceptions are constantly transmuted into the finer forms of an ideal world.”.

Emerson helped the Western world to realize that all peoples have contributed to



man's inheritance of religious and philosophic truth and that the revelation of this truth is contained not in the Bible alone but in all the sacred literatures of the world. On the other hand, his writings have shown to the Oriental reader that the West is not merely materialistic, that out of the West can come mystical inspiration and rich ethical and spiritual wisdom.

## EMERSON AND HIS FRIENDS

### RALPH WALDO EMERSON

Near the middle of the last century two brilliant groups of writers appeared in the English-speaking world,—one in Great Britain and the other in the United States of America.

To the English group belongs Dickens, Thackeray, Carlyle, Matthew Arnold, Newman, Ruskin, Tennyson and Browning.

The American group is not less illustrious. It contains the names of James Fennimore Cooper, America's earliest novelist—a writer of powerful stories about the American aborigines, and also about adventures on the sea; Washington Irving, the essayist, historian and humorist, who is sometimes called the American Addison; Edgar Allan Poe, a fanciful and striking poet and a writer of weird romances; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, a poet of varied and rich gifts who has attained a world-wide fame, whose poems are said to be read even in England more than those of Tennyson; James Russell Lowell, a poet of distinction and the most eminent literary critic that

America has produced; Oliver Wendell Holmes, poet, humorist, novelist and brilliant essayist, author of the famous "Breakfast Table" series of books; John Greenleaf Whittier, "the good Quaker poet"—the best known and most loved religious poet of America; Nathaniel Hawthorne, America's greatest novelist; Henry D. Thoreau, a very remarkable literary interpreter of nature; Walt Whitman, a poet whose rugged style defies all literary rules, but whose fresh, stimulating and daring thought gives him many admirers on both sides of the Atlantic; Mark Twain (Samuel Clemens), a humorist whose books are read and enjoyed in all lands; and, finally, Ralph Waldo Emerson, the essayist, poet and thinker, of whom I wish here to speak.

When we come to compare these American writers one with another, of course, we find no single one superior to the rest in all respects. One is superior in one way and another in another. But I think it is the almost universal judgment that, taken all in all, the first place—the place of greatest distinction—clearly belongs to Emerson. It is true that some other writers are in a way more popular. Longfellow is more widely read; so doubtless are several novelists and humorists. But Emerson is read by the intellectual and thoughtful classes—by those who influence the thought and life of the

people—far more than any other author of the New World. Nor is his influence confined to America. It is greater in England than that of any other American writer, as probably it is also on the European continent. Into Asia, too, his writings have penetrated or are penetrating widely.

Emerson was born in Boston, Massachusetts, in 1803, and died in Concord, a village near by, in 1882. His parents and ancestors were persons of intelligence, education and high character, but not of wealth. His father was a Christian minister living in Boston, who died when his son, Ralph Waldo, was only eight years old, leaving a widow and four or five children. The mother was left with little means, and the struggle which she had to undergo in order to support and educate her family was severe. In after-life Emerson often referred to the hardships of those days as among the greatest benefits of his life, because, he said, they taught him industry, economy, resourcefulness, self-reliance, and courage in facing and overcoming obstacles.

Partly through the aid of his mother and partly by his own persistent exertions he was able to obtain a good education in the schools of Boston and in Harvard College.

His aim in life was to be a Christian minister as his father had been. With this in mind he studied divinity for a time with

Dr. Channing, the eminent Unitarian preacher and philanthropist, and settled as pastor of a church in Boston. In this position he remained four years; but by the end of that time he had become convinced that his life-work was not to be that of a settled minister of a single church, but rather that of a writer and public lecturer. He wished still to devote his life to moral and religious teaching, but he believed he could do so best through his pen and on the public lecture-platform.

Accordingly, he went out to the little village of Concord, a quiet place, twenty miles or so from Boston, in the midst of sweet New England country scenery, and there made for himself a home, which he occupied for the rest of his life. For many years he continued to preach much, in the various towns and villages in the vicinity of his home, but he never accepted a stated charge; and more and more his writing and lecturing came to absorb his time and strength.

The reason he chose Concord as a place of residence seems to have been partly that this had been the home of some of his ancestors, and partly that it was a lovely and quiet spot near enough to the metropolis to afford him easy access to the city's activities and privileges, and yet far enough away to give him the retirement and peace of the country. His home amid these rural surroundings was to Emerson much what Rydal Mount was

to Wordsworth and what Santiniketan is to Rabindranath Tagore. Writing of his settlement there he says : " I am by nature a poet, and therefore must live in the country." And how truly nature was his companion through all the well-nigh forty-five years of his residence amidst her fields and woods, her brooks and flowers and quiet paths, every reader of his books well knows.

Nature is to every human soul what that soul makes her to be. To the soul that can perceive it, she is an infinite wonder, a teacher whose lessons are new every morning and fresh every evening, a never-failing fountain of joy and inspiration. She was all this to Emerson, else he could never have given to the world such a wealth of poetry and wisdom drawn from nature's heart.

Emerson bought a little farm in Concord. Writing later of his purchase he said :

" When I bought my farm I did not know what a bargain I had in the bluebirds, bobolinks and thrushes, which were not charged in the bill. As little did I guess what sublime mornings and sunsets I was buying, what reaches of landscape, and what fields and lanes for a tramp. Neither did I fully consider what indescribable luxury is our Indian river, which runs parallel with the village street, and to which every house in that long street has a back door through the garden to the river bank. Still less did I know what good and true neighbours I was buying; men of thought and virtue. . . I did not know what groups of interesting school boys and school girls were to greet me in the highways and take hold of one's heart at the school exhibitions."

Emerson's love of nature was constant and very ardent. Some said it ate up his love of men. But such do not know Emerson well. His friendships were always warm and sincere; his interest in his neighbours, even the poorest, was striking and beautiful. He used often to chat with the farmers at their work; he had personal acquaintance and friendship with the humblest day-labourers; he loved and was loved by the school children; he was a general favourite in the village. Everything that pertained to the welfare of the community he was interested in. Nor did his love of men stop with his personal friends, and neighbours, and the town where he resided. It reached out far—to all humanity, and especially to all who suffered or were wronged.

Few genuine reforms of the half century preceding his death, from the anti-slavery cause to the movement to enlarge the sphere of woman, failed to receive his support. The reform methods with which he most sympathized were not violent. The ways of Garrison and Wendell Philips and Theodore Parker were not his way. He preferred gentle words to severe. And yet, his position upon the anti-slavery question was not equivocal, and there were times when he spoke words as stinging with indignation and protest as any from the lips of Garrison. Few men of his generation uttered wiser,

calmer, more weighty or braver words upon any of the great subjects that most deeply concerned the moral, religious, social, political, or even industrial life of his country and age.

For more than forty years there were few places in America, or in any other land, to which came so many noble spirits as to that simple Concord home. The wisest and best men and women of America were Emerson's friends, and loved to sit down at his fireside. Distinguished visitors from the old world eagerly sought him in his retreat. Few homes were so charming. But it was simplicity itself, as the man was all simplicity. Indeed, its simplicity and genuineness were its charm. Truth and sincerity, sympathy and love, were the guardian spirits that habitually dwelt there. No wonder, therefore, that men and women, alike the humble and the great, loved to enter.

Emerson's general plan of life during most of his Concord years, was to give three or four months of each winter to public lecturing—the winter being the best season for that work—and devote the rest of the year to quiet study, thinking and writing at home.

His common habit when at home was to spend his forenoons at hard work in his library or study, and his afternoons out of doors, either alone or with a chance com-



panion, rambling in the fields or woods, rowing on the water, lying on the grass in the meadow or by a brook-side, observing the eternal beauty and change of nature, and studying her marvellous secrets. And what rest, healing and peace he found in nature !

He wrote of himself :

“ A woodland walk,

A quest of river-grapes, a mocking thrush,

A wild rose or rock-loving columbine

Salve my worst wounds.”

His distinguished friend and neighbour, Bronson Alcott, once wrote concerning Emerson :

“ Fortunate the visitor who is permitted to join the poet in the afternoon walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere,—hours to be remembered as unlike any other in the calendar of experiences. Shall I describe them as sallies, oftenest into cloud-lands,—into scenes and intimacies ever new, none the less novel or remote than when first experienced ?—interviews, however, bringing their own trail of perplexing thoughts,—costing some days, duties, several nights’ sleep sometimes, to restore one to his place and poise. Certainly safer not to venture without the sure credentials, unless one will have his pretensions pricked, his conceits reduced in their vague dimensions. But to the modest, the ingenuous, the gifted—welcome ! Nor can any bearing be more poetic and polite to all such,—to you and accomplished women especially. His is a faith approaching to superstition concerning admirable persons, the rumour of excellence of any sort being like the arrival of a new gift to mankind, and he the first to proffer his recognition and hope.”

Emerson gained popularity as a lecturer only very slowly. After settling in Concord he gave a series of lectures in Boston each winter for several years, in a hall which he himself hired for the purpose. His audiences are said to have been small. Besides giving these lectures he went wherever there were calls, speaking upon literary, historical, biographical, political or religious subjects,—but always with a high ethical purpose in view, always so treating his themes as to make them alive with quickening thought, electrical with fine feeling, challenges to just judgments, trumpet calls to courageous, manly and noble living.

We are told that to one who wrote in the earlier part of his career inviting him to the distant western city of Cincinnati to deliver a lecture, he replied : “ Why, my dear Sir, you have not a hall in Cincinnati small enough to hold the audience that will come out to hear me.” But slowly his fame grew: and for many years he had all the lecture engagements he could fill.

Rather early in his public life he was invited over to England to deliver a series of lectures before various Mechanics’ Institutes. Perhaps the class of hearers which these Institutes furnished was not the best adapted to grasp such thought as he had to present. We are told that at one of his lectures two young mechanics were sitting together trying

hard to follow him, but with little success. By and by one whispered to the other, "I say, Jim, don't you think that may be we could understand him better if we stood on our heads?" One does not wonder much at the inquiry. And yet, the difficulty of understanding him lay, after all, perhaps more in the fact that his thought was new than in any want of clearness of expression on his part. If these young mechanics had listened to him a few times, the probability is that before they were aware they would have found his sentences growing strangely luminous, and his thought throwing a spell over them such as they had never known.

If Emerson gained popularity slowly as a lecturer, quite as slowly did he gain public favour as a writer. His first book, *Nature*, was twelve years in reaching a sale of five hundred copies! Today the works of few writers, outside the realm of fiction, have so large or so steadily increasing a sale, and not only in America, but in England, and wherever the English language is spoken. Of no American writer is it so true, that he "comes to his own," and "his own sheep hear his voice." But the minds that receive him are the best minds. He teaches the teachers; he preaches to the preachers; he writes poetry for the poets; he thinks for the thinkers: and this in every land where his works are read.

Emerson has been called the American

Carlyle, the American Coleridge, the American Wordsworth, the American Bacon, the American Goethe, the American Plato, according as men have looked at different aspects of his thought or literary work. He may well remind us of many men; yet he is as individual, as thoroughly himself, as any modern writer. If originality can be said to belong to any author of modern times, then Emerson is original.

It is hard to say whether Emerson is greatest as a poet or as a prose writer. Indeed, it is not always quite easy to tell just which of his writings are poetry and which are prose. But whether he writes in verse or prose, his thought is always that of the poet. It is pictured thought. It is thought transformed by a powerful imagination into forms of life. His poetry ranges from the simplest—as simple as anything in Longfellow or Burns—to the most profound—as profound as anything in Wordsworth, or Goethe, or Browning. He is always more intent upon his thought than upon its forms; sometimes therefore his rhymes are somewhat faulty and his metres limp. He seems to have a sort of disdain of poetical rules; the great thing with him always is to make his thought flash and burn, or pierce like an arrow. And yet some of his poems are as simple and as perfect in form as anything in the language. By American scholars, thinkers

and religious leaders his poetry is very much prized and quoted.

Turning to Emerson's prose writings, it may be noted that his Phi Beta Kappa oration on "The American Scholar," delivered at Harvard University (then Harvard College) early in his public career, has often been pointed to, and, perhaps, with good reason, as marking an era in American letters. Its effect at the time of its delivery was certainly great. It is hard to point to any other single utterance or production in American literary history that has been so awakening or so influential. I would strongly advise anyone who has not read his works, but who purposes to do so, to begin with this address.

Emerson cannot be regarded as the father of American literature, for many books of considerable worth had been written before his day. But he has been called, and with much truth, the emancipator of American literature. When he came on the scene American writers of both prose and poetry were generally timid, afraid to stand on their own feet. Each writer in the new land thought he must follow patterns and precedents in England or on the Continent of Europe. Emerson said, "This is bondage; we must break the bonds. Imitation means weakness; it means sterility; it means death. Let us no longer be content to remain

children. It is time we were men. Let us begin to see with our own eyes, and to report what we see. Let us begin to think for ourselves, and write what we think. Then will the New World of America begin to produce books worth reading, and the Old World will begin to respect our literature and us." With Emerson's great Harvard address, America's spirit of imitation and bondage began to pass away, and a new spirit of self-respect and of independence, came in its place. If the literature of America for the past sixty or seventy years has been as fresh, as original and as virile as any in the world, the credit is due to Emerson far more than to any other writer.

No one can understand Emerson unless he bears in mind that he is by nature a prophet, a seer, not a logician. His aim is simply to give you his thought, and you are to accept it or reject it according as it seems to you true, or not; according as it meets your need, or not. He will not press it on you; he will not even attempt to prove its value. Of that you must be the judge. He is not a logician; he makes no attempt at logic, he does not care for logic. He wants to show, to reveal, to help you to see for yourself. His method is to enunciate, not to prove; to state, not to argue. He cares far more to flash truth on you, to make you vividly see its reality and deeply feel its beau-

ty and power, than to give you any amount of reasoning about it or any mere logical demonstration of it.

This absence of logic, of formal processes of reasoning, causes his writings sometimes to seem fragmentary, his ideas disconnected. But this is chiefly on the surface. Look deep enough and you find there is a connection, there is a unity, there is a very vital relation between his thoughts, even if not always a logical one.

Growing out of this is another characteristic of his writings,—they are remarkable for their affirmations. It follows that they are seldom controversial. True, he can deny if there is need for it; his books contain many vigorous negations. But the thing he loves is to affirm,—to affirm without any reference to anyone else's opinion. He never answers his critics or reviewers. Whatever they say about his ideas, he does not turn aside to reply, but goes right on and delivers his next message, and the next and the next. He affirms and evermore affirms his *own* thought, he does not combat *yours*. Thus he does not needlessly offend, and you are willing to receive from him ideas far more advanced than you would receive from a more combative mind. This is one reason, doubtless, why his thought is so influential, why it spreads so widely, why it is accepted in so many quarters where we should suppose there

would be only hostility to it. If he more than any other writer is the leader of thought in the Western world, this is an important element in the explanation. Instead of fighting men's errors, he shows men new truths,—truths so self-evidencing and so splendid that in the bright light of them the errors silently creep away ashamed into the dark corners, and are left behind and lost.

If Emerson's place in literature is great, it is also somewhat peculiar. More than almost any other writer he is read for his thought. His style exactly fits his thought, but it is for his thought that he is sought and prized,—the freshness of his thought, its keenness and penetration, its subtlety, its daring; its power to interest, rouse, startle, and inspire; its power to awaken dissent and protest, and yet in the end to compel assent, even against our will; its power to break up our old conceits, prejudices and ignorances and to lead us to enlightenment, sometimes without our quite knowing it; its power to charm us, and by its charm to lead us from lower to higher ideals, whether we will or no; its power to turn the world and humanity and our own ideals upside down, and inside out, and yet to restore all to us again created anew, and more beautiful, more wonderful, more normal and more right than they were before. Such has always been, and still is, the



wonderful power and charm of Emerson's thought to thousands.

All of Emerson's writings, both prose and poetry, are wonderfully full of sententious lines, short, apt, pregnant sentences, which fasten themselves in men's minds and become current coin of quotation. No other American writer, perhaps no other writer in the English language, with the single exception of Shakespeare, is quoted so much. If Emerson's mind is less many-sided than Shakespeare's, his spiritual insight, his grasp on great moral principles, and his power to condense his thought so as to pack a volume into a dozen striking words, is beyond that of Shakespeare—I believe it is beyond that of any other Western writer, living or dead. To make quotations from his works illustrating this is a very easy task. One has scarcely more to do than to open any one of his volumes, prose or verse, at any random page, and read. Here is a little handful of pearls and diamonds, such as lie scattered all through his rich pages. I give them merely as specimens, choosing such as are most familiar and mainly from his poems :

"If eyes were made for seeing,  
Then beauty is its own excuse for being."

"The conscious stone to beauty grew."

"He that feeds men serveth few;  
He serves all who dares be true."

"To the poet, to the philosopher, to the saint all things are sacred, all events profitable, all days holy, all men divine."

"So nigh is grandeur to our dust,  
So near is God to man,  
When duty whispers low, 'Thou must,'  
The youth replies, 'I can.'"

"Go, put your creed into your deed,  
Nor speak with double tongue."

"For he that worketh high and wise,  
Nor pauses in his plan,  
Will take the stars out of the skies  
Ere freedom out of man."

"Give me breath and a day, and I will make the pomp of emperors ridiculous."

"Reverence God, and where you go men shall think they walk in hallowed cathedrals."

"When a man lives with God, his voice shall be as sweet as the murmur of the brook and the rustle of the corn."

"Unlovely, nay, frightful, is the solitude of the soul which is without God in the world."

"Don't say things. What you are stands over you and thunders so loud that I cannot hear what you say."

"What is Heaven but the fellowship of minds that can each stand against the world."

"Though love repine and reason chafe,  
There comes a voice without reply,—  
'Tis man's perdition to be safe  
When for the truth he ought to die."

"On bravely, through the sunshine and the showers !  
Time hath work to do, and we have ours "

"His heart was as great as the world, but there was no room in it to hold the memory of a wrong."

"Lowly listening we shall hear the right word."

"The ideal life haunts us all. We feel the thing we ought to be, beating beneath the thing we are."

"Alas! that *things* are in the saddle, and ride mankind."

"Our dissatisfaction with any other solution, is the blazing evidence of immortality."

"Shallow men believe in luck; strong men believe in cause and effect."

"The greatest homage we can pay to truth is to use it."

"What is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent."

Where shall we stop? As well ask where to stop when we begin counting the stars of the night-sky, or gathering flowers from the endless meadows of spring.

There was much of a mystic in Emerson. In his earlier years they called him a "transcendentalist." In his later years he left some of that behind, but he always retained a strong element of mysticism in his thought. Perhaps without it he could not have been a poet. But all was balanced by an element of keen, clear commonsense that runs through all his thinking and writing. He never "loses his head." If his thought has wings, it also has feet that stand firm on the solid earth. If he is a mystic, or a transcendentalist, he is also a very practical "Yankee." With all his philosophy and all his idealism, he dearly loves facts. He fairly revels in facts—facts

as foundations for his thinking, facts as teachers of lessons, facts as illustrations—facts of every kind, near and remote, common and uncommon, sometimes erudite, sometimes homely, often quaint, but always flashing new and unexpected light on the subject in hand. Thus while he is one of the subtlest of thinkers, and one of the most daring, he is also one of the sanest. His love for facts and reality keep him from running off, as many thinkers who leave the old paths do, into wild speculations and baseless “fads” and “isms.”

Emerson had a wonderful respect for personality,—for the individuality of every human being, no matter how humble. He treated every one with deference,—a deference which he sincerely felt. He believed that each human soul is a new and original creation, different from every other soul, with distinct gifts and a distinct place to fill in the world, with an original and important, even if limited, contribution to make to the world's thought and feeling and life. Hence, the importance of each person being given freedom to live his own life and think his own thought, and thus be able to make his contribution. Emerson was one of the best of conversationists because he was one of the best of listeners. And he was one of the best of listeners because he respected every human soul and believed that

absolutely every person has ideas and feelings that are worth attention from the wisest minds.

Emerson was a profound believer in science. He followed its wonderful discoveries with deepest interest. He saw in it a new, and marvellous, and many-sided, and ever-growing revelation of God. But, of course, he saw it all with the eyes of the seer, the thinker, the poet, and he interpreted its teachings and deductions in the light of his own idealism. He would have science a living, not a dead thing. He would have it vivified and glorified by creative insight, by imagination, by poetry, by religion. While he honoured scientists above most men, yet for those scientists who begin with matter and end with matter, who investigate matter and contend that that is all there is, he had little respect. To scientists he said—

“Bring on your facts : the more, the better. I bow reverently before every one. But I beg of you, gentlemen, do not study one-half of the universe alone, and that the lower and poorer half. Bring me facts and deductions about souls as well as bodies, about spirit as well as matter. Is not a man more important than a fossil and the mighty mind of man that can weigh and measure the stars than a bug ?”

Emerson rejoiced in the power which modern science has given man over the forces of nature, enabling him in marvellous ways to harness wind and water and steam and

electricity and make them his servants. He rejoiced in inventions and machinery. But he did not rejoice in the uses to which too often they are put. They ought to be liberators of men, and enlargers of men's lives; whereas too often they are allowed to enslave men, brutalize them, turn them into human machines.

Too often this great new power is used to increase the wealth of the unscrupulous and sordid, to multiply useless luxuries which injure and debase. Of course, this is not the fault of the inventions or the machinery, but of their bad use. The trouble lies in men's selfishness, greed and low aims. As Emerson puts it, "Things are in the saddle and ride mankind." This is fatal. Men and governments must learn (Emerson believed that sooner or later they will learn, even if through much suffering and disaster) to keep humanity in the saddle, and to use "things," including science and all machinery, for the liberation, for the uplift, for the real benefit of humanity.

Emerson was a believer in Evolution, even before Darwin. In geology and other sciences he read the marvellous story of the earth's onward and upward history, from fire-mist to water and rock, then to soil, then to the lowest forms of vegetable and animal life, then to higher and ever higher : until man is reached. "It is a long way from

granite to the oyster; further yet to Plato, and the preaching of the immortality of the soul. Yet all must come as surely as the first atom has two sides."

"Striving to be man, the worm  
Mounts through all the spires of form."

Emerson saw clearly that evolution is still going on. Man is not yet fully made, but is only in the making.

"We still carry sticking to us remains of our former lower existences." "Still half-buried in the soil, millions are pawing to get free . . . . A cultivated man, wise to know and bold to perform, is the end to which Nature works,—is the flowering and result of all geology and astronomy."

How glorious is Emerson's thought of the man of evolution: In his enthusiasm hear him exclaim,—

"O rich and various man! thou palace of sight and sound, carrying in thy senses, the morning and the night and the unfathomable galaxy: in thy brain the geometry of the city of God; in thy heart the power of love and the realms of right and wrong. An individual man is a fruit which it cost all the foregoing ages to form and ripen."

Emerson's sense of the essential greatness of human nature is scarcely less than that of Channing. According to his thought there can be no final disaster to man.

"Man is born to a priceless heritage that no three-score-and-ten years of failure here can rob him of. There may be aberration, as of a star, but the soul will come again into its constant orbit."

There are persons who declare evolution godless, who say it drives God from Nature, and gives us a mechanical universe,—a universe of mere blind matter, or matter and force. Not so to Emerson's thought. To him God is the very secret, the very explanation, the very heart of Evolution, God is

"The Energy that searches through  
From chaos to the dawning morrow;  
Without halting, without rest,  
Lifting Better up to Best."

To Emerson's thought the whole evolutionary process, from fire-mist to amoeba and from amoeba to Shakespeare and Darwin and Buddha and Jesus, throbs with the very life of God. It is simply God's method of creation; it is God "objectivizing Himself," it is God's ever clearer and clearer shining path of light and splendor as He marches down through the aeons of eternity and time carrying out His plans of infinite wisdom and good. God is the "Over-soul." His presence, His power, His life, bind the worlds together. The Universe is One because He is One.

"The world is the ring of his spells,  
The play of his miracles.  
This vault which glows immense with light  
Is the inn where he lodges for a night.  
He is the axis of the star;  
He is the sparkle of the spar;  
He is the heart of every creature,  
He is the meaning of each feature."



Nature is the flowing robe in which God clothes Himself. Stars shine with His light. Roses are beautiful with His beauty. Our dear ones love us with a love which they did not create, but which must have come from a Divine Source higher than themselves. Thus is God not far removed from us, but central in our lives, the Fountain of our day, the Light of all our seeing, nearer to us, if possible, than we are to ourselves. Such a thought of God as this, an intelligent age can no more reject than it can reject gravitation, or its own rationality.

Nothing is more central in all Emerson's teaching than his constant appeal to men to be themselves, to think their own thought, to do their own work, to live their own lives, and not be mere echoes of other men. Listen to his ringing words : / "It belongs to the brave to trust themselves infinitely, and to sit and hearken alone." "The whole value of history, of biography, is to increase my self-trust by demonstrating what man can be and do. . . . Plato was, and Shakespeare, and Milton,—three irrefragable facts. Then I dare; I also will essay to be." "Trust thyself: every heart vibrates to that iron string." "Whoso would be a man must be a nonconformist. . . . If the single man plant himself indomitably on his instincts, and there abide, the huge world will come round to him."

"Though love repine, and reason chafe,  
There comes a voice without reply,—  
'Tis man's perdition to be safe,  
When for the truth he ought to die."

One who knew Emerson well said, "At his house it is always morning." This was because in his soul there was always morning. His influence in the world has been morning influence. He was a son of the day. His writings shed cheer and hope. If you wish to drive darkness out of the world, he says, let your light shine : then the darkness will go. Never hang a dismal picture on your wall, he urges; never put darkness and gloom into your conversation. Do not be a cynic. Do not be a croaker: leave croaking to frogs. Do not waste your time barking at the bad : chant the beauty of the good. Never worry people with dismal views of politics or society. Never talk discouraging things. Encourage men, that is what they need ! If you cannot speak encouraging things, be silent. Seldom name sickness; talk health, talk courage, talk strength. Help somebody. Be a bringer of hope to men.

Emerson is pre-eminently a writer for young men. Young men feel the splendid youthfulness and courage of his spirit. Often and often he says to young men : Have faith in yourselves; dare; you can conquer if you *believe* you can. You have not yet

learned the lesson of life unless you are able every day to overcome a fear.

Emerson read much, and his reading was wide and comprehensive. Bearing in mind that the tissue given him for his existence in this world was the present, and not any past or future age, he endeavoured to keep himself intelligent about all the significant events, all the things of real importance, going on in his day. But the mere passing sensational news, the superficial public gossip, the ephemeral community or city or state or national or international tattle, which the papers like so well to give the public, he cared little for. He read with interest histories, and books of travel, and fiction, and folk-lore of many peoples, and discoveries of science, and spent much happy time on these and yet his most ardent delight was in great books of thought. I am sure that he followed his advice given to others, "never to read books until they are a year old," and thus avoid wasting time on trash; but his great love was for books of the ages, which had proved their worth by living on from century to century,—Plato, Plutarch and the great tragedians of Greece; Hafiz, the Persian; Confucius of China; the great sacred books of India; the Old Testament of the ancient Hebrews; the New Testament of the early Christians; Chaucer and Shakespeare of England; Swedenborg, the Swede.

Emerson was much interested in Indian literature. I think if he were living today he would be deeply interested in India's struggle to free herself from bondage. And not only from political bondage, but also from the cultural bondage which long subjection to a foreign power has forced upon her. I think his message to India would be : It is evil and degrading to you to be culture-slaves as to be political slaves. Stand up. Dare. Think your own thought, shape your own education, foster your own genius, build up your own civilization. Determine to create a literature of your own as great in the present as in the past. Only thus can you be worthy of your own respect. Thus and only thus can you contribute your part to the spiritual life of the world.

I now come to Emerson in his supreme capacity, namely, that of a teacher of ethics and religion. No man is more essentially an ethical teacher—none more truly a teacher of religion. \*

But, in order that this may appear, we must understand what is meant by religion and ethics. Emerson teaches no system of ethics; he teaches no formulated theology. His ethics is the ethics of the Golden Rule; of the normal, happy, right life; of natural, needful, and, therefore, beneficent retributions, here and hereafter. It is the ethics of the soul, of the conscience, of moral intuition,

of moral and spiritual law, of the experience of the world.

In the same way his religion is a thing of life and not of forms or creeds. If he can enunciate a moral principle, or a religious truth, so as to make men feel its power, so as to cause it to commend itself to men's minds, and consciences, and spiritual nature, then he counts his task well done.

To Emerson nature, life, science, law, everything is ethical, "Heaven kindly gave our blood a moral flow." "Things are saturated," he writes, "with the moral law. There is no escape from it. Violets and grass preach it; every change, every course in nature, is nothing but a disguised missionary."

Because nature culminates in the ethical, therefore it culminates in man. Emerson's sense of the dignity of humanity is scarcely less than that of Channing. To Emerson man is not something apart from nature, but the best expression of nature's deep meaning—the crowning product of nature's divine life. Ever nature struggles upward—the lower toward the higher, the higher toward the highest; and in man the highest is reached. In one of his poems Emerson represents Nature as saying "I travail in pain for him" (man),

.  
"Let war and trade, and creeds and song,  
Blend, ripen race on race,

The sunburnt world a man shall breed  
Of all the zones and countless days."

No writer holds higher ideas of what it is to be a man than he, or scorns more the counterfeits which pass current for manhood. Robert Burns' lines—

"The rank is but the guinea's stamp,  
The man's the gowd  
For a' that

are quite matched by Emerson's couplet—

"One ruddy drop of manly blood  
The surging seas outweighs."

According to Emerson, there can be no final disaster to man.

"Man is born to a priceless heritage that no three-score-and-ten years of failure here may rob him of. There may be aberration, as of a star, but the soul will come again into its constant orbit."

Emerson's deepest passion—so deep that it pervades all his life and all his writings, is his love of moral perfection in all men, and his desire to attain it for himself. He writes in his diary.:

"Milton describes himself in his letter to Diodati as enamored of moral perfection. He did not love it more than I. That which I cannot yet declare has been my angel from childhood until now. It has separated me from men. It has watered my pillow. It has driven sleep from my bed. It has tortured me for my guilt. It has inspired me with hope. It cannot be defeated by my defeats. It cannot be questioned though all the martyrs apostatize."

Emerson's religion is in harmony with his ethics. Indeed it is only the flowering of

his ethics into fuller beauty and more perfect life. This is only another way of saying that his religion is Natural Religion. True religion is not unnature, he declares, or antinature, or even supernature; but just nature's own deepest, holiest, divinest outcome. But we must understand nature in a large enough way. We must include in our meaning *all* of nature, not merely the lowest part. We must include mind as well as matter; thoughts as well as stones; the whole realm of the intellectual, the moral and the spiritual, as well as the realm of the physical. When we understand nature in this large and adequate way, we see the ground for Emerson's belief in natural religion. The religious instinct in man is as natural as anything else in man and what is wanted is not to destroy man's nature but to guide, train, develop and perfect it. Just in so far as the great religions of mankind conform to natural religion they are true and eternal. Just in so far as they depart from natural religion and are based upon the artificialities of ipse dixits, of external authorities, they are transient. Writes Emerson :—

"Out of the heart of Nature rolled  
The burdens of the Bible old."

This applies not only to the Christian Bible, but to all Sacred Books.

From all this it follows that Emerson's religion is Universal Religion. He cannot

believe in a partial God—one who can choose out a single nation of the earth for his favour and his salvation, and leave all the rest in darkness and death. He cannot believe revelation to be confined to one book. Rather is it too large a thing for all books that ever have been or ever will be written. "God hath not left Himself without witness in any land or among any people."

Above all else let us have a personal religion, a faith of our own, and not a mere shadow or echo of some other person's faith. Let us believe what we see to be true, and not merely what somebody else saw to be true. Let us go to God direct. Let us have a religion that is a personal experience, and therefore as authoritative as that of Isaiah or Paul or Buddha or Jesus. Too much of the religion of our time has become degraded into a mere record of what has been. "The foregoing generations beheld God and nature face to face; we, through their eyes. Why should not we also enjoy an original relation to the universe? Why should not we have a poetry and philosophy of insight and not of tradition, and a religion by revelation to us, and not the history of theirs?"

Some have said that Emerson sought to minimize religion, narrow it, limit it, impoverish it. On the contrary, his effort was ever to magnify it, enrich it, widen



it, make it great. His plea was for more religion, not less; for better religion, not poorer; for deeper religion, not shallower; for a religion of deeds, not professions and forms; for a religion not confined to Sundays and Churches, and acts called by religious names, but a religion pervading all life. If he would have men pray and read their sacred books in the religious spirit, he would also have them plow, and build railroads, and calculate eclipses, and sing lullabies to babes, and make laws for nations, and buy and sell, in the religious spirit, that is, in the spirit of truth and honor, of gentleness and justice, of fidelity and sincerity.

Emerson's life was a long one. Seventy-nine summers smiled on him, seventy-nine winters beat on him with their storms : but it was one long summer of light, and love, and peace in his heart. The years could make his body old, but not his soul. He always lived simply and naturally. He would not hurry. He took time, or he went along, really to live; that is, he took time to see, to think, to feel, to enjoy,—to admire, to worship,—to watch all the silent processes of nature, and learn her infinite patience and her joy.

Friends were dear; his home was full of love and sincerity; his heart was always open to children; he stood for ever facing the sunrise.

Swedenborg says of the angels in heaven that "they are continually advancing to the spring-time of their youth, so that the oldest angel appears the youngest."

It was much so with Emerson. In spirit he grew rather younger than older with the years.

As he drew near to old age, as men count old age, he wrote his poem entitled "Terminus," which shows well his thought and feeling. He writes :—

"Economize the failing river,—  
Not the less revere the Giver.  
Leave the many, hold the few;  
Timely wise, accept the terms,  
Soften the fall with wary foot;  
A little while  
Still plan and smile,  
And, fault of novel germs,  
Mature the unfallen fruit."  
"As the bird trims her to the gale,  
I trim myself to the storm of time;  
I man the rudder, reef the sail,  
Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime;  
Lowly faithful, banish fear,  
Right onward drive unharmed;  
The port, well worth the cruise, is near,  
And every wave is charmed."

Emerson seems to me the most cosmopolitan of all our modern writers. He appears to me to have the largest intellectual horizon, to look upon the world and on life with the broadest vision, to possess the widest

sympathies, and therefore to come nearest to being a world teacher.

If you can read only one writer of the West, my word is, read Emerson. Why? Because he, more than any other, makes the whole world an open book, and absolutely all men interesting, worth knowing and worth loving.

He widened the intellectual horizon of his time. Better still, he helped his time to a firmer hold on moral principles, and a deeper insight into spiritual laws.

He wrought for toleration, for charity, for human brotherhood; for philanthropies and reforms of many kinds; for all genuine and sincere heart pieties.

Reason in religion never had a braver champion, or bigotry in religion a sterner foe. The religion of the Golden Rule, and of God's fatherhood and man's brotherhood, never, since the great prophet of Nazareth fell asleep, has found a nobler teacher by word or by life.

His character was well-nigh spotless; his personality was powerful; his writings are classics in the English tongue; his influence as an apostle of "sweetness and light" is exceeded by that of no man of his century.

The most cosmopolitan son of the New World, his thought and work were not alone for *America* but for *all lands*, and I believe for *all time*.

## EMERSON'S CONCORD

"I like to close my eyes and see Old Concord—the mill dam, the Wright Tavern, the rather busy business blocks, the Green and the trees beyond, the little river, the patriarchal figure of Mr. Alcott with his white hair, Miss Louise driving about in her wicker pony carriage with its white horse, Miss Ellen Emerson riding sidewise, with billowing skirts, on her donkey, Hawthorne walking meditatively along the street, Thoreau talking with a friend, and Emerson, with his tall and slightly stooping figure, a shawl about his shoulders, waiting patiently in line with the rest at the post-office wicket, looking as I imagine Dante looked on the streets of Florence." So wrote a young woman from Washington who visited Concord in 1878.

The literary associations of Concord are not its only claim to fame. Perhaps no one of the smaller towns of New England, unless it be Plymouth, is more significantly related to early American history. It was settled only fifteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims, and the visitor to Concord is shown the spot where stood the ancient oak, known as Jethro's Tree, under the branches of which the first English settlers bought from the

Indians six square miles of land forming the Concord Plantation. The locations of the first dwellings in this settlement and of the first Meeting House are still pointed out.

Concord early became a center of educational and political influence. The first Provincial Congress was held here in 1774, presided over by John Hancock. In anticipation of the Revolution large quantities of military supplies were stored in Concord as a safer place than Boston; and it was the attempt of the British, coming out from Boston, to capture and destroy these, that caused the first bloodshed of the revolutionary struggle. The modern visitor is shown the battleground. Wright's Tavern, occupied by the British, and later by Washington, may still be visited. In 1775, Harvard College was temporarily removed from Cambridge to Concord, to be farther from the British headquarters in Boston.

When Ralph Waldo Emerson settled in Concord it was a typical old-time New England village, such as were commonly the outgrowth of early American life in that region,—a type which for nearly two centuries remained essentially unchanged, until the advent of railroads and factories. With its gentle, winding river and its wooded hills, Concord offered surroundings of peaceful beauty for a quiet, simple and independent life. Several generations of Emerson's

ancestors had lived here and this doubtless added to its attractions for him. Soon after coming to make his home in the village we find him writing in his Journal, not without some emotion : " Hail to the quiet fields of my fathers ! " He had many happy boyhood memories of Concord, too, when he had enjoyed nothing better than going out there from Boston, with his brother, to visit at good Dr. Ripley's where they could run wild in the pastures and woods and swim in Walden Pond.

Though Boston was his birthplace and childhood home, Emerson came to feel that the city was not the place where he wished to spend his life. An entry in his Journal while he still lived there showed how his wishes and plans for his future were tending away from the city. " I am by nature a poet," he wrote, " and therefore must live in the country." It was this deep impulse in him that found expression in his poem " Goodbye, Proud World " which was written several years before he left Boston.

" Goodbye, proud world ! I'm going home ;  
Thou art not my friend, and I'm not thine.  
Long through thy dreary crowds I roam ;  
A river-ark on the ocean brine,  
I've been tossed like the driven foam ;  
But now, proud world, I'm going home.  
O, when I am safe in my sylvan home,  
I tread on the pride of Greece and Rome ;  
And when I am stretched beneath the pines,

Where the evening star so holy shines,  
I laugh at the lore and the pride of man,  
At the sophist schools and the learned clan;  
For what are they all in their high conceit,  
When man in the bush with God may meet ? ”

Although he could speak of the city with a fine poetic scorn, yet he must have been aware that the vocation he was choosing for himself,—that of a writer and lecturer—was dependent upon city contacts, so, in selecting Concord for his country home, he was doubtless influenced by the fact that it was only twenty miles from Boston. Yet it was in the midst of real country,—a region of hills and valleys, fields, deep woods, running streams, ponds and small lakes, orchards, herds of grazing cattle, rich bird life, and wild flowers. There were glimpses of distant mountains and opportunities for endless quiet walks and for solitude such as poets and thinkers love.

How happy and content Emerson was in his choice of Concord as his home is shown by many entrances in his Journal. Here is one : “ If God gave me my choice of the whole planet or my little farm, I should certainly take my farm.” This he wrote after he had had fifteen years of paying taxes, of fetching in wood in his arms to feed the fires of his house, and of struggling in vain to root the chickweed and witch-grass out of his garden.

His essay called "Concord Walks" begins as follows: "When I bought my farm, I did not know what a bargain I had in the bluebirds, bobolinks and thrushes, which were not charged in the bill; as little did I guess what sublime mornings and sunsets I was buying—what reaches of landscape, and what fields and lanes for a tramp. . . . Still less did I know what good and true neighbors I was buying, men of thought and virtue, some of them now known the country through for their learning or subtlety, or active or patriotic power. . . ; and other men not known widely but known at home, farmers, doctors not of laws but doctors of land, skilled in turning a swamp or a sand-bank into a fruitful field and, where witch-grass and nettles grew, causing a forest of apple trees or miles of corn and rye to thrive.

"I did not know what groups of interesting school boys and fair school girls were to greet me on the highway, and to take hold of one's heart at the school exhibitions."

His farm consisted at first of two acres of land, just a little out of the main part of the village, with a well-built, roomy house and a small barn. Later he added other acres, thus gaining not only a garden, but an orchard, pasture for a horse and cow, and, most glorious of all, a grove of noble pines



on a high bluff beside Walden Pond, with a view over its waters and over many miles of country beyond.

Such were the externals of his Concord paradise. Sharing it with him were a most excellent wife, and four dearly loved children, three of whom were his joy all his life. The death of the fourth one, a singularly bright boy, at the age of five years, inflicted upon his father perhaps the sharpest sorrow of his life.

The home was one of security, quietness, affection, unselfishness, mutual regard of all its inmates for one another's interests, hospitality to friends and neighbors, interest in all good causes, open-hearted and open-handed generosity to the poor and the suffering. Oliver Wendell Holmes closes his book on Emerson with these words : " If He, who knew what was in man, had wandered from door to door in New England, as of old in Palestine, we can well believe that one of the thresholds which those blessed feet would have crossed, to hallow and receive its welcome, would have been that of the lovely and quiet home of Emerson."

Emerson's experiment in gardening did not yield him roses alone;—with the roses there were some rather sharp thorns. Here is one of his descriptions of gardening when its discouraging side looms large : " With brow bent, with firm intent, the pale scholar

leaves his desk to draw a freer breath and get a juster statement of his thought in the garden-walk. He stoops to pull up a purslain or a dock that is choking the young corn, and finds there are two; close behind the last is a third; he reaches out his hand to a fourth, behind that are four thousand and one. He is heated and untuned, and by and by wakes up from his idiot dream of chickweed and red-root to remember his morning thought and to find that with his adamantine purposes he has been duped by a dandelion."

Often, in his Journal, we find him laughing at himself for his ignorance of gardening and telling humorous anecdotes about his mistakes in farming methods, but, on the other hand, insisting on the renewal of hope and courage, the quickening of his whole life, physical, intellectual and moral, which he gets from his hoe, his pruning knife, his hayfield and his wood-lot. Here is one such passage from his Journal: "I know of no manner of calming the fret and perturbation into which sitting and too much reading, writing and talking bring me, so perfect as physical labor. My garden yields me sanity and self-control. My hoe, as it bites the ground, revenges my wrongs, and I have less heart to bite my enemies. I confess I work sometimes with some venom, and expend a little unnecessary strength. But, by smoothing the rough hillocks, I smooth

my temper; by extracting the long roots of the grass, I draw out my own splinters; and in a short time I can hear the bobolinks sing and see the blessed deluge of light and color that rolls around me." In one of his poems he declares : " All my hurts my garden spade can heal. "

Although Emerson disliked crowds and loved to be alone, whether strolling in the woods, or working at his desk,—yet he was not by nature a recluse. He prized friends and enjoyed his Concord neighbors. With those of them who had gardens or fruit orchards he liked to discuss new varieties of vegetables and best methods of fertilizing, trimming and grafting apple and pear trees. In his walks in the village it was by no means an unusual thing to see him stop before the open doors of a blacksmith shop and watch the smith shoeing a horse, admiring and praising his skill; or, in his walks in the country, leaning over a fence to talk with the farmer about his plowing or his crops.

He took great pleasure in the town-meetings. He saw in them the strength and safety of New England. He felt that in this institution the problem is solved of how to give every individual his full weight in the government. " Here," he declared, " the rich give good counsel, but the poor do also. It is an everlasting testimony of man's capacity for self-government." His son says of him, " He

sat among his neighbors and watched the plain men of the town manage their affairs with the courage of their convictions, seldom taking part in the debate and then with great hesitancy and modesty, and then came home to praise the eloquence and strong good sense of his neighbors." In his Journal we find this entry: "At the town meeting last night I was greatly impressed with the leaders. Four of those who spoke would have satisfied me if I had been in Boston or Washington."

Of no class of his neighbors does he speak with a heartier admiration than of farmers, whom he describes as "stalwart fellows, deep-chested, long-winded, tough, slow and sure." His enthusiasm rises to its crest in his picture of "the all round New England boy who learns to do everything,—who teams it, farms it, peddles, keeps a school, preaches, edits a newspaper, goes to Congress, and buys a township."

For a number of years Emerson was manager of the village Lyceum, using his influence to induce prominent speakers to give lectures, and often entertaining the lecturers at his own home. Each winter he himself gave one lecture and sometimes two or three. The whole number that he delivered before lyceums during his Concord life was exactly one hundred.

In 1835, when the town celebrated the

two hundredth anniversary of its settlement, he delivered the historical address. On all sorts of important and public occasions he was the person almost invariably chosen to preside or to speak, everybody feeling that he always said "the right word."

Emerson and his family were associated with the Concord Unitarian Church, of which his grandfather and great-grandfather had been pastors. He served on the Concord school committee and in the village fire company. He belonged to the Concord Social Club. Of this last group which met on Tuesday evenings through the winter, he writes as follows in his Journal: "Much the best society I have ever known is a Club in Concord called 'The Social Club,' consisting always of twenty-five of our citizens—doctors, lawyers, farmers, traders, millers, mechanics, etc.,—soldest of men, who yield the soldest of gossip. Harvard University is a wafer compared with the solid land which my friends represent. I do not like to be absent from home on Tuesday evening in winter."

It was Emerson's custom to take long afternoon walks, sometimes alone, sometimes with companions,—Henry Thoreau, Ellery Channing the poet, or a chance visitor. It is the universal testimony that he never conversed so well as on these walks with others. When no congenial companion was at hand,

he was equally content to walk alone. Here is his own description of such solitary jaunts : "It is a hot July day. I put on my old clothes and my old hat and slink away to the whortleberry bushes and slip with the greatest satisfaction into a little cow-path where I am sure I can defy observation. This point gained, I solace myself for hours with picking blue-berries and other trash of the woods, far from fame, behind the birch trees. I seldom enjoy hours as I do these. I remember them in winter, I look forward to them in spring." In his Journal he tells us that while he had always counted himself a lover of nature and had always been fond of reading books of outdoor life and adventure, yet he had never known what the country really was until he had a home there,—what Nature really meant until he went to Concord to live with her, to be her companion, friend, student, lover, in all seasons, in sunshine and storm, day and night. All things became new to him,—grass, flowers, meadows, streams, birds, insects, sunrises and sunsets, night skies. The splendid, ever-changing, ever-wonderful world of Nature entered into him, became a part of him as never before, adding new joy to his life, and new freshness, depth, insight and power to his thinking and writing. It may well be that, had he stayed in Boston where city conventions and house-fronts could limit his horizon, his universe

would have been less splendid, his thought less fresh, the wings of his spirit less strong and daring.

Ralph Waldo Emerson's last resting-place is in the beautiful Sleepy Hollow Cemetery of Concord. There under spreading Concord elms he lies, among his neighbors and friends whom he loved, Hawthorne, Thoreau, the Alcotts, the Channings, and those lesser folk who also filled an important place in his Concord life.

## **EMERSON AND DOCTOR EZRA RIPLEY**

One of Emerson's earliest ties with Concord came through Doctor Ezra Ripley, the pastor of the Concord church, to whose home Ralph Waldo, then a boy in Boston, made many happy visits. Dr. Ripley was step-grandfather to Emerson, having married his grandmother, the wife of William Emerson, who was Dr. Ripley's predecessor in the Concord pulpit and who had joined the American army of the Revolution and died of an infectious fever. William Emerson had built the now famous "Old Manse" as a home for his family and it was here that Ralph Waldo came on his visits to his grandmother and Dr. Ripley.

When Ralph Waldo was eight years old his father died, leaving five small boys and their mother with scant means of support. Dr. Ripley immediately came to their aid, and befriended them in a hundred ways as long as there was need. Once, in a hard winter, the whole family were taken into his home in Concord as guests for some months.

The intimacy of the two families was very close, and continued so as long as Dr. Ripley lived. There was nothing connected with Ralph Waldo's boyhood that he looked back upon all his life, with more pleasure,



or mentioned in his conversation and writings with more enthusiasm, than this great-hearted friend, and the many good times enjoyed in Concord roaming the fields and the woods while a guest in his hospitable home.

Dr. Ripley was a type representative of the early American church and the Puritan life of New England. He was one of the last of those strict Puritan Congregational ministers who had served the New England churches for two hundred years, and who notwithstanding their narrow theology, had been leaders in building up the religious life, the moral character, and the educational institutions of the country. Emerson grew to differ widely from him in religious doctrine. Dr. Ripley had clung to the theology of the past; Emerson advanced to the front of modern thought. But Dr. Ripley possessed so many rich and fine qualities of heart and head that Emerson appreciated, admired and loved him.

In Emerson's biographical sketch of Dr. Ripley he says: "He was identified with the ideas and forms of the New England Church, which expired about the same time with him, so that he and his coevals seemed the rear guard of the great camp and army of the Puritans, which, however declining in its last days into formalism, in the heyday of its strength had planted and liberated America.

It was a pity that his old meeting-house should have been modernized in his time. I am sure all who remember both will associate his form with whatever was grave and droll in the old, cold, unpainted, uncarpeted, square-pewed meeting-house, with its four iron-grey deacons in their little box under the high pulpit,—with Watts' hymns, with long prayers, rich with the diction of ages; and not less with the report like musketry from the movable seats."

In his later life, as Unitarian thought more and more spread among the churches of New England, Dr. Ripley and his church joined the movement, but he remained always conservative. He was not by nature a controversialist. The doctrine he preached was not of a kind to antagonize anybody; he cared more to help men practically and to build up the moral life of his parishioners and his community. His sermons were not learned, nor intellectually great, but they were effective,—people liked them because they dealt with near-at-hand living matters and because they were spoken by a minister whom they loved and trusted, and who, they were sure, spoke every word from his heart, with the sole purpose of encouraging, strengthening and comforting them.

Dr. Ripley devoted himself without stint to his pastoral work. He knew everybody in his parish, old and young, rich and

poor,—and everybody's father and mother and grandfather and grandmother. His long pastorate of sixty-five years (from 1778 to 1841) enabled him to do this as no new preacher could. He felt responsibility for every one of his flock. All the children must be educated. All suffering must as far as possible be relieved. Did any boy or young man show signs of going to the bad, he must be admonished and everything possible must be done to save him.

Emerson relates the following incident from his boyhood experience. He was taken by Dr. Ripley to attend the funeral of the father of one of the families in his congregation. On the way the Doctor expressed his fears that the eldest son, who was now to succeed to the farm, was becoming intemperate. He must warn the young man. They arrived, and the faithful pastor addressed each of the mourners separately: "Sir, I condole with you." To another, "Madam, I sympathize with you." When he came to the eldest son, "Sir, I knew your great-grandfather. When I came to this town he was a substantial farmer in this very place, a member of the church and an excellent citizen. Your grandfather followed him, and was a virtuous man. Your father is to be carried to his grave, full of labors and virtues. It rests with you to bear up the good name and usefulness of your ancestors.

If you fail, 'Ichabod, the glory is departed.' Let us pray."

Emerson tells us, "An eminent skill he had in saying difficult and unspeakable things, in delivering to a man or a woman that which all their other friends had abstained from saying, in uncovering the bandage from a sore place, and applying the surgeon's knife with a truly surgical spirit. Was a man a sot or a spendthrift, or too long time a bachelor, or suspected of some hidden crime, or had he quarrelled with his wife, or collared his father, or was there any cloud or suspicious circumstance in his behaviour, the good pastor knew his way straight to that point, believing himself entitled to a full explanation, and whatever relief to the conscience of both parties plain speech could effect, was sure to be procured."

"With a very limited knowledge of books," says Emerson, "his knowledge was an external experience, an Indian wisdom, the observation of such facts as country life for nearly a century could supply. . . . He showed even in his fireside discourse traits of that pertinency and judgment, softening ever and anon into elegance, which make the distinction of the scholar."

He had the courtesy characteristic of the gentleman of the old school, and the hospitality that made all visitors welcome in his home.

From Emerson's early boyhood until Dr. Ripley's death when Emerson was a man of thirty-eight, the affectionate friendship between the two was a source of joy and inspiration to both. The strong personality, the unflinching moral courage, the religious zeal, the kindly and generous nature of the older man doubtless had their part in influencing the developing boy and young man. When Emerson was ordained to the ministry, Dr. Ripley delivered the address to the candidate, an address full of affectionate pride in his young friend and confidence in his future. Emerson's years of residence in Concord, later, cemented the friendship and the mutual esteem and affection in which each held the other.

## EMERSON AND "AUNT MARY MOODY"

Perhaps no personal influence in Emerson's life except that of his mother exerted a stronger influence upon his development than his intimate and lifelong friendship with Mary Moody Emerson, his aunt on his father's side. In the biographical sketch of her which Emerson wrote after her death he says, hers was "a representative life such as could hardly have appeared outside of New England; of an age now past and of which I think no types survive. . . . It has to me a value like that which many readers find in Madame Guyon, in Rahel, in Eugenie de Guerin, but it is purely original and hardly admits of a duplicate. It is a fruit of Calvinism and New England and marks the precise time when the power of the old creed yielded to the influence of modern science and humanity."

It is almost impossible to characterize this remarkable woman. In attempting to do so Emerson himself employs the adjective "proud, pious, eccentric, exacting, inspiring." Of all these, not the least emphasis should be placed on the word "eccentric." Some persons even called her crazy. But Emerson would never listen to that. There was too much "method in her madness." He

recognized in her a brilliant mind, even if strangely and sometimes annoyingly erratic. To him her extravagances had a direct connection with genius. There were real gems and gold in her thought. She was a woman of high character and great earnestness. She was sincerely religious. She was never so happy as when helping somebody and doing good.

Her story was to a degree tragic. She was born in the midst of the Revolutionary War. Her father was Ralph Waldo's grandfather, William Emerson, minister at Concord, ardent patriot, who enlisted as chaplain in the American army at Ticonderoga but in a few months was taken ill and died. He had a wife and four children, a boy and three girls, all of whom except Mary, the youngest child, he left at his home in Concord. Mary, a babe, he carried to his mother in Malden, with the request that she keep the child until his return from the war. The little girl remained with her grandmother for a time, until the death of the latter, after which she was adopted by her father's brother, who lived on a farm. The farm was poor, the neighbors were distant; she had little society and suffered many hardships. But she early learned to read and had an insatiable eagerness for knowledge. As a result she read every book in the house and all she could borrow. By the time she

reached womanhood she was possessed of an amount of information that amazed everybody. On the death of her adopted parents she was left means sufficient to afford her a modest support. She never afterwards had a home, but passed her years as a wanderer in many different places,—living sometimes for brief periods with relatives, sometimes with friends.

During the childhood of Ralph Waldo Emerson she spent considerable time in the home of his father (her brother) in Boston, and became very much attached to the five young boys of the family, especially to Ralph,—an attachment that was never broken.

There could hardly have been a greater contrast between two women than between the stern, eager, restless aunt and the mild, gentle, home-loving mother. But each appreciated and esteemed the other and in many ways each supplemented the other. Aunt Mary became almost a second mother to the small boys. She was rigorous and exacting with them, but she had the rare ability to win their respect, admiration and love. They looked up to her, they were stimulated by her. They willingly heeded and obeyed her. It was no wonder, for she took a constant interest in them—in all their studies, in their work and in their play. She praised them when they did well and frowned on them when they did poorly. She stirred



ambition in them always to do their best. When a task was hard she laughed and called it all the better fun. One of her stirring injunctions, given to them often, was, "Always do what you are afraid to do." Young Ralph Waldo was so impressed with this that he never forgot it, and when he came to have children of his own, his son tells us, he spurred them with the same rigorous motto.

Seemingly Ralph's first correspondence was with Aunt Mary. Whenever she was away they wrote to each other; and all his letters were written with great care, for he knew that she would notice any mistake, however small, and any sentence that was not perfectly grammatical or not in perfectly good taste. This correspondence was kept up many years, in fact most of their lives, and it always had the same stimulating, invigorating influence on him.

In view of the fact that in his boyhood he was obliged, by lack of financial means, to be much dependent on others, she warned him against the dependent spirit, declaring that it was a mean spirit, that he must think of himself as in the world not to get but to give; not to receive benefits from others but to confer benefits on others.

At the age of thirty-six, Emerson writes in his Journal: "I spent all yesterday afternoon reading Aunt Mary's letters. She

is a genius. Her thought is always new, subtle, frolicsome, musical, unpredictable. All your learning of all literatures and of all states of society, Platonistic, Calvinistic, English or Chinese, would never enable you to anticipate one thought or expression of hers. She is embarrassed by no Moses or Paul, no Angelo or Shakespeare, after whose type she is to fashion her speech. Her wit is the wild horse of the desert. . . . In reading these letters of Aunt Mary Moody, I acknowledge (with surprise that I ever could forget it) the debt of myself and my brothers to that old religion which, in those years, still dwelt like a Sabbath peace in the country population of New England; which taught privation, self-denial and sorrow; that man was born, not for prosperity, but to suffer for the benefit of others, like the noble rock-maple tree which in all the villages bleeds for the service of man."

In another entry in his Journal Emerson writes of her: "My Aunt Mary Moody Emerson has an eye that goes through you like a needle. She is dowered with the fatal gift of penetration. She disgusts many people because she knows them too well." Again in the entry of November, 1834, Emerson writes: "Aunt Mary is now boarding here in Concord. She keeps up a surprisingly good understanding with the world considering her transcendental way of

living. Yesterday, she came here with the shabbiest horse and chaise, which she says she saw standing at the door where she was stopping, and, having found out whom it belonged to, she asked the man to let her go and ride while he was making his purchases, for she wanted to go up to Dr. Ripley's. The man, I suppose, demurred, so she told him she was his own towns-woman, born within a mile of him; and finally, she says. when she left him, he told her not to hurry. . . .

"Once she even impressed the horse of a man who came to call the physician at whose house she was stopping, and rode sidewise in a man's saddle to the manse."

Besides many references in Emerson's Journals to this eccentric, gifted, highly esteemed relative and friend, we have among his biographical sketches an extended account of her. In one paragraph there he appraises the influence of Aunt Mary Moody on his own boyhood when he says: "She gave high counsels. It was the privilege of certain boys to have this immeasurably high standard indicated to their childhood; a blessing which nothing else in education could supply." He quotes from a letter of her nephew Charles Emerson: "I am glad the friendship with Aunt Mary is deepening. As by seeing a high tragedy, reading a true poem, or a novel by Corinne, so, by society

with her, one's mind is electrified and purged."

When Mary Moody Emerson visited her relatives and friends, her coming was likely to give some consternation. Yet at the same time it was often, at least to the children and young people, much like the coming of a circus. She always furnished spice. There was nothing dull in the house while she was there. She was a nettle; but, if the sting was not too sharp, those that were stung were likely to rub the place and laugh, because it came from Aunt Mary. A friend said of her: "She is too concentrated a bitter cordial to be ever taken long at a time at any one boarding place." When she had stayed at one place as long as she cared to, all of a sudden she would be off for another.

In looking for a boarding place she usually preferred the home of a minister. She generally had very distinct ideas about how he should write his sermons and manage his parish, and was not likely to be slow in giving him information on these subjects. Yet the keenness of intelligence with which she did it and the wit and humor that she mixed with it, usually modified his pique and often caused him considerable quiet enjoyment. If she fell into discussions with him, as was often the case, he found that he had an antagonist worthy of his steel. After she had gone away his sermons were apt to be

noticeably brighter and more practical than before.

One of the stories Emerson tells about her in his biographical sketch is very amusing. "When Mrs. Thoreau called on her one day, wearing pink ribbons, she shut her eyes, and so conversed with her for a time. By and by she said, 'Mrs. Thoreau, I don't know whether you have observed that my eyes are shut.' 'Yes, Madam, I have observed it.' 'Perhaps you would like to know the reasons?' 'Yes, I should.' 'I don't like to see a person of your age guilty of such levity in her dress'."

At one time she was offered marriage by a man of ability, education and social position, for whom she had respect and esteem. Emerson says she gave the proposal consideration but finally decided to reject it.

In her own way she was deeply religious. Her religion was Calvinism with such of its corners as she did not like knocked off. Only those persons were to be sent to hell who, she thought, deserved to go there. Mr. Emerson says that in his boyhood she wrote the prayers which he and his brothers read mornings and evenings at the family devotions. And in middle life he declares that at times her "prophetic and apocalyptic ejaculations" still sound in his ears.

She thought and talked a great deal about death, especially in her later years. She

had no fear of it for herself but often seemed eager for it, feeling sure that on the other side, all would be well for her and for those whom she loved and approved. Several years before she died she made for herself a neat white dimity shroud. Since the occasion for using it for its intended purpose was long delayed, it seemed to her a pity to have it lie idle, so she wore it, first as a night-gown, and later as a day-gown, going out on the street in it, and even wearing it on horseback. Out of doors on cool days she threw a shawl over it. Mr. Emerson thought she made and wore out several shrouds.

There are many evidences that she realized her eccentricities, the criticisms that they brought upon her and the barrier that they formed between herself and others. Her diaries and letters reveal that this realization sometimes gave her pain. At other times she ignored and defied it.

Emerson's fondness for "Aunt Mary," notwithstanding her eccentricities and her often cutting speech, is shown by the testimony of his son : "My father would often consider it a fortunate conjunction of the stars that brought this fiery and affectionate Sibyl to Concord from her peregrinations and wanderings in various parts of New England." Again he writes : "The constitutional oddities of this strange enthusiast must not

so far absorb attention, that her achievements in culture and piety shall be forgotten." Her thought and her character were permeated through and through by her lifelong devotion to the writings of Plato, Aristotle, Plotinus, Milton, the English poets of her own time, and, above all, the Bible. The unselfish nobility of her character is well summed up in this sentence which Emerson himself quotes from her : " What I regard as my best gift from God is my delight in the superiority of others."

## **EMERSON AND SARAH BRADFORD RIPLEY**

Another woman who, like Mary Moody Emerson, greatly influenced Emerson's early development and remained throughout his life a beloved and stimulating friend, was Sarah Bradford Ripley, wife of Reverend Samuel Ripley of Waltham, Massachusetts. Emerson's biographer, F. B. Sanborn, says, she was "the most learned woman of New England." She was a classical scholar and taught Greek and Latin in her husband's college-preparatory school for boys. Emerson's son, Dr. Edward Emerson, says, she was the chief strength of the school. President Felton of Harvard said that she could have filled any professor's chair in that university. Professor Child went so far as to declare : "She is the most learned woman I have ever known, the most diversely learned, perhaps, of her time, and not inferior in this respect, I venture to say, to any woman of any age."

Emerson's acquaintance with her began when, as a boy, he was sent to be a pupil in her husband's school in Waltham and she became one of his teachers. She was not only a fine teacher but so attractive and charming a woman that all the boys fell in love with her,—of course, including young



matics, in natural philosophy, in psychology, in theology, as well as in ancient and modern literature. She had always a keen ear open to whatever new facts astronomy, chemistry, or the theories of light and heat had to furnish. Any knowledge, all knowledge, was welcome. Her stores increased day by day.

"She was absolutely without pedantry. Nobody ever heard of her learning until a necessity came for its use, and then nothing could be more simple than her solution of the problem proposed to her. The most intellectual gladly conversed with one whose knowledge, however rich and varied, was always, with her, only the means of new acquaintance. . .

"She was not only the most amiable but the tenderest of women, wholly sincere, thoughtful for others... She was absolutely without appetite for luxury or display or praise or influence, with entire indifference to trifles."

## EMERSON AT HARVARD AND IN THE UNITARIAN MINISTRY

Emerson was a graduate of Harvard college, of the class of 1821. Though he entered young, he had had such excellent preparation in Greek and Latin that he was able to read and write both with considerable ease. His acquaintance with English literature was already wide, and during his college course he read extensively the works of the great English, French and German authors. Courses in literature and rhetoric he enjoyed and excelled in, while mathematics he disliked.

As a student, Emerson was generally liked by his fellows and by the professors. The President (for whom he rendered certain regular services) became particularly his friend. Emerson was described in those days as of a sensitive and retiring nature.

His talents for writing and for speaking were already beginning to manifest themselves and he won two college prizes for essays and one for declamation. He was also beginning to write poetry and was chosen class poet.

After graduating from Harvard Emerson taught for a time. In 1823 he began the study of theology under the guidance of Dr. William Ellery Channing. Dr. Channing was

one of the most eminent of the Boston preachers. He was the intellectual and spiritual leader of the liberal Unitarian wing of the Congregational church. Emerson's father was a Unitarian minister and it was natural that Ralph Waldo, in preparing himself for the ministry, should have looked to the leading thinker and preacher of the Unitarian movement as his ideal. The noble and fearless character of this great man and his clear and independent thought had an important influence upon the youthful Emerson and were a permanent source of inspiration in his life and work.

Thus inspired by the ethically and spiritually rich liberalism of Dr. Channing's religious teaching, Emerson entered the Unitarian ministry in Boston in 1829. For nearly three years he was pastor of the second Unitarian church there. At the end of that time he resigned because of conscientious scruples against administering the "Communion" in the customary way, and he never again took a pastorate, though for some years he continued to do occasional preaching in neighboring Unitarian pulpits.

In the winter of 1836-7, three years after resigning his church, he delivered a series of ten lectures in Boston which attracted much attention, though they were considered by many conservative critics dangerously heretical.

In August, 1837, he delivered an address before the Phi Beta Kappa Society at Harvard on "The American Scholar," in which he set forth his philosophy. Lowell speaks of the occasion of this lecture as "an event without parallel in our literary annals, a scene to be always treasured in the memory for its picturesqueness and its inspiration. What crowded and breathless aisles, what windows clustering with eager heads, what grim silence of foregone dissent!"

The following year Emerson gave at Harvard his famous Divinity School Address. The radical religious views he expressed in this address caused a break between him and his *alma mater*. It was a clear, outspoken and uncompromising statement of his religious philosophy and ideals, and proved a thunderbolt out of a clear sky to the conservative element among the professors of Harvard Divinity School. Rev. Henry Ware, junior Professor in the Divinity School, strongly dissented from certain of Emerson's ideas, declaring that they appeared to him "more than doubtful, and their prevalence would tend to overthrow the authority and influence of Christianity." At the same time he took pains to speak with great respect of Mr. Emerson himself and of "the lofty ideas and beautiful images of spiritual life which you throw out, and which stir so many souls."

As a matter of fact, the address met with more favor in the Divinity School than outwardly appeared, while in the College proper it was received with enthusiasm by not a few students and professors. Nevertheless, for some years after this the college authorities generally were cold toward Emerson; he was not particularly welcome at college functions nor was he shown much honour or attention as an alumnus. His criticism of Edward Everett and Daniel Webster, and his sympathy with the anti-slavery movement added to the antagonism which Harvard felt toward him.

However, conservative feeling could not permanently obscure the greatness of such a thinker as Emerson and it was inevitable that eventually Harvard should be proud to bestow upon him some of her highest honors. In 1867 he was made an Overseer of the college and the degree of LL.D. was conferred upon him. Also at this time he was invited to deliver another Phi Beta Kappa address,—afterwards published in his volume, "Literary and Social Aims." It had been almost thirty years since he had appeared before as a speaker in the Harvard halls.

In 1870 he accepted an invitation to deliver a course of fourteen lectures under the philosophical department of Harvard. These were warmly received by both faculty and students.

It is gratifying that Emerson's *alma mater* grew into an appreciation of this great alumnus during his lifetime. Later a hall of philosophy at Harvard was built in his honor and named after him.

## **EMERSON AND HENRY DAVID THOREAU**

A visitor to Concord who stops at the old colonial inn which dates back to Revolutionary days, and who inquires about the history of the inn, will be told that one portion of it was originally a separate house and was the home of John Thoreau, the father of the poet-naturalist. It was here that Henry was born and spent his boyhood. He attended the schools of the village, but from his earliest years nature was his favorite teacher. By the time he was twelve years old it was said of him that he possessed more knowledge of the woods, streams, pastures, hedges, swamps, birds, turtles, and bugs of Concord and vicinity than any other person in the neighborhood. Later he went to Harvard and although he was not a brilliant student, he obtained a good acquaintance with mathematics, Latin and Greek. He was an ardent reader of the books of his own choosing, but always a still more ardent student of nature. After his college course was over, he returned to his native village to make his permanent home.

From the first Thoreau was a puzzle to the people of Concord,—he was so different from others, he had such ways of his own, he would not walk in beaten paths. They

respected him, they trusted him; no one had a finer character; they admired him for his large knowledge,—seemingly there was nothing he did not know; they admired him for his extraordinary abilities,—seemingly there was nothing he could not do. But why did he not, like other young men, get married and settle down to some regular trade or business or profession? He taught school a while; he made lead pencils (his father's business) a while; he did almost any kind of odd job that offered,—often surveying, at which he was very skilful. But there was no continuity. He seemed to have no desire to make money, or acquire property. His supreme aim seemed not to get, nor even to do, the things that most people get and do, but to see, to think, to understand, to experience, and to live what to him seemed the truest, deepest, richest life possible. He kept a diary. One summer morning he wrote in it: "I wish to begin this summer well, to do something in it worthy of it and of me; to transcend my daily routine and mortal life now in the quality of my daily life."

"May the life of this summer be ever fair in my memory; may I dare as I have never done; may I preserve as I have never done: may I purify myself anew as with fire and water, soul and body."

"May my melody not be wanting to the season; may I gird myself to be a hunter of



the beautiful, that naught escape me; may I attain to a youth never attained."

"I am eager to report the glory of the universe; may I be worthy to do it. It is reasonable that man should be something worthier at this season than he was at the beginning."

It was not strange that many found it difficult to understand such a man. But among the few who understood and prized him was Emerson. Soon after Emerson settled in Concord he made the acquaintance of young Thoreau, then recently back from college,—fifteen years his junior. Almost at once a warm friendship sprang up between them, which lasted until Thoreau's death. Charles J. Woodbury in his book "Talks with Emerson," says: "Of no one did Emerson talk so often and tenderly. Emerson *made* Thoreau; he was the child of Emerson. The development of this sturdy bud into its sturdier flower was a perpetual delight to the philosopher. In Thoreau he lived himself again."

When Thoreau began to lecture, only a small group of people went to hear him, but these found that he had something to say that was worth listening to. Later, when he wrote his first book, it attracted little attention,—so little that the Boston publisher presently told him there was no use trying longer to get sales. Thoreau carried home

the unsold copies and calmly made a record in his diary to the effect that he had become the possessor of quite a large library, some eight or nine hundred volumes, all of his own writing. Emerson's popularity as a writer was of slow growth; Thoreau's was slower still. But his books were destined to become known and read (by a select but influential class) in all parts of this country and of the world. At the opening of the Concord Free Public Library at which Emerson gave the address, he spoke of Thoreau as "the writer of some of the best books which have been written in this country, and which, I am persuaded, have not yet gathered half their fame." Mahatma Gandhi has told us that Thoreau was one of the three writers of the West that had influenced him most. Today the Concord people tell you that, next after Emerson, they are indebted to Henry Thoreau for making their village known to the world.

During all his life Thoreau was of invaluable service to Emerson. Edward Emerson tells us that in the spring of 1841 his father made a pleasant and successful alliance with Henry Thoreau, then twenty-four years old, which continued two years. Thoreau became, as it were, an elder son in the family, attended to the gardening, established a poultry yard, grafted the trees, did odd jobs and skilfully made repairs in the house. "He

was man of the place during Mr. Emerson's absences, and was most respectfully attentive to Mrs. Emerson, whom he always looked up to as a sort of lady-abbess. He was a delightful friend to the children, and had great gifts of amusing and helping them. He reserved what time he wished for studies, afield and at home. Sometimes he walked with Mr. Emerson and showed him Nature's secrets in the woods or swamps or on the river. Mr. Emerson's lack of skill in gardening or household emergencies was admirably supplemented by his young friend."

Emerson had hoped when he first entered into this arrangement that through instruction from Thoreau in garden work, in caring for his orchard and in the other technical phases of farming, he might himself be able to attend to the work of his small farm. But he soon found that manual labor took too much of his time and energy and interfered seriously with his writing. "When the terrestrial corn, beets, onions and tomatoes flourish," he wrote, "the celestial archetypes do not." So he restricted himself to the garden of the mind and left the outdoor work largely to his young friend.

When Emerson went to Europe in 1847, he left Thoreau in charge of his home during his absence.

In 1845, Thoreau built himself a small frame house on the shores of Walden Pond,

and lived there for two years alone, a life of labor and study. As soon as he had exhausted the advantages of that solitude, he abandoned it.

Emerson said of him, "He was a born protestant. He declined to give up his large ambition for knowledge and action for any narrow craft or profession, aiming at a much more comprehensive calling, the art of living well. Never idle or self-indulgent, he preferred, when he wanted money, earning it by some piece of manual labor agreeable to him, as building a boat or a fence, planting, grafting, surveying, or other short work, to any long engagements. He could plan a garden or a house or a barn; would have been competent to lead a Pacific Exploring Expedition; could give judicious counsel in the gravest private or public affairs. With hardy habits and few wants, his skill in woodcraft and his powerful arithmetic, he was very competent to live in any part of the world. It would cost him less time to supply his wants than another. He was therefore secure at his leisure. He had no talent for wealth, and knew how to be poor without the least hint of squalor or inelegance. He declined invitations to dinner-parties because there each was in everyone's way, and he could not meet the individuals to any purpose. 'They make their pride,' he said, 'in making their dinner cost much. I make my

pride in making my dinner cost little.' He chose to be rich by making his wants few and supplying them himself." He much preferred "a good Indian" to fashionable society. Again, "Hermit and stoic as he was, he was really fond of sympathy, and threw himself into the company of young people whom he loved and whom he delighted to entertain, as only he could, with the varied and endless anecdotes of his experiences by field and river; and he was always ready to lead a huckleberry party or a search for chestnuts or grapes."

There were times when Emerson found Thoreau a little too disputatious for his taste. The following entry in Emerson's Journal was written when this feeling was strong: "Henry is military. He seemed stubborn and implacable; always manly and wise, but rarely sweet. One would say that, as Webster could never speak without an antagonist, so Henry does not feel himself except in opposition. He wants a fallacy to expose, a blunder to pillory, requires a little sense of victory, a roll of the drums, to call his powers into full exercise."

Thoreau was a great walker, frequently taking tramps of many miles. Often Emerson accompanied Thoreau on these tramps and many of them he describes in his Journals. Those entries throw interesting sidelights on the character, tastes and habits

of the two men and on their friendly intimacy with each other.

In his Journal of May 2, 1857, Emerson writes : " Walked yesterday with Henry to Goose Pond and to the Red Chokeberry Lane. Found sedge flowers (and eight other varieties of flowers which he designates by their Latin names). From a white birch Henry cut a strip of bark to show how a naturalist would make the best box to carry a plant or other specimen requiring care, and thought the woodmen would make a better hat of birch bark than of felt,—a hat with cockade of lichens thrown in. We will make a book on walking, that is certain, and have easy lessons for beginners. ' Walking in Ten Lesson'."

" May 30. Walked this afternoon with Henry Thoreau. Found the *Uvularia perfoliata* (bell wort) for the first time by Flint's Pond; found the chestnut-sided warbler. Heard the note of the latter, which resembles the locust sound; saw a cuckoo. Found the chestnut-oak in Lincoln. Henry thinks that planting acres of barren sand by running a furrow every four feet across the field, with a plough, and following it with a planter, supplied with pine-seed, would be lucrative. He proposes to plant my Wyman lot so. Henry says that the flora of Massachusetts enhances almost all the important plants of America."

" June 9. Yesterday a walk with Henry

in search of *actaea alba* (white baneberry), which we found, but only one plant, and the petals were shed. We found at Cyrus Smith's the *Juglans nigra*, black walnut, in flower. I do not find black walnut in Bigelow. Henry praises Bigelow's descriptions of plants : but knows sixty plants not recorded in his edition of Bigelow."

In Emerson's biographical sketch of Thoreau, he says of him : "He was the attorney of the indigenous plants, and owned to a preference for the weeds to the imported plants. 'See these weeds,' he said, 'which have been hoed at by a million farmers all spring and summer, and yet have prevailed and just now come out triumphant over all lands, lanes, pastures, fields and gardens, such is their vigor. We have insulted them with low names, pigweed, wormwood, whickweed, shad-blossom. They have brave names too,—ambrosia, stellaria, amclanchier, amoranth, etc.' "

Do we not perceive Thoreau's voice in Emerson's fine lines :

"Let me go where'er I will,  
I hear a sky-born music still.  
'Tis not in the high stars alone,  
Nor in the cups of budding flowers,  
Nor in the redbreast's mellow tone,  
Nor in the bow that smiles in showers,  
But in the mud and scum of things,  
There alway, alway, something sings "

Emerson declared of Thoreau : " There is not a fox or a crow or a partridge in Concord that knows the woodlands better than Thoreau."

The naturalist had a high estimate of Walt Whitman. Emerson comments on it, saying : " Perhaps his fancy for Whitman grew out of his taste for wild nature, for an otter, a woodchuck or a loon." Emerson said the three men in whom Thoreau felt the deepest interest were his Indian guide in travels through the Maine woods, John Brown and Whitman.

When Thoreau died, Emerson delivered an address at his funeral and in this as well as in the innumerable references to him all through his Journal, we discern his affection and admiration for this long-time friend. Here is a sentence from that address :

" Thoreau was made for the noblest society, he had in a short life exhausted the capabilities of this world; wherever there is knowledge, wherever there is virtue, wherever there is beauty, he will find a home."

Perhaps no better summing-up of Thoreau's character could be given than is expressed in his own prayer :

" Great God ! I ask thee for no meaner pelf,  
Than that I may not disappoint myself;  
That in my conduct I may soar as high  
As I can now discern with this clear eye,



That my weak hand may equal my firm faith,  
And my life practise more than my tongue saith."

Students of Emerson and Thoreau have raised the question,—was either an echo of the other? Dr. Edward Emerson in his book "Emerson and Concord" replies: "The charge of imitating my father, too often made against Thoreau, is idle and untenable. It may well be that the young Thoreau, in his close association under the same roof, with Mr. Emerson at a time when he had few cultivated companions, may have unconsciously acquired a trick of voice, or even of expression, and it would have been strange if the village youth should not have been influenced by the older thinker for a time, as Raphael by Perugino. But this is the utmost than can be admitted. Thoreau was incapable of conscious imitation." F. B. Sanborn, who knew them both well, says: "Thoreau never imitated anybody. There was nothing but originality in him." Emerson himself, in one of the entries in his Journal, writes as follows: "Henry Thoreau does not disclose new matter. I am very familiar with all his thoughts, they are my own, quite originally dressed. If the question be, what new ideas has he thrown into circulation, he has not yet told me what that is which he was created to say." Again, we find Emerson saying: "In reading Thoreau, I find often the same thoughts, the same

spirit that is in me; but he takes a step beyond, and illustrates by excellent images, that which I should have conveyed by a sleepy generalization. He has muscle, and ventures on and performs feats which I am forced to decline. 'Tis as if I went into a gymnasium, and saw youths leap and climb and swing, with a force unapproachable, though their feats are only a continuation of my initial grapplings and jumps."

To a student of the writings of the two, who tries to be impartial, the truth seems to be that both were highly independent and original in their thinking but that, as the result of their long and very close intimacy, each influenced the other to a very considerable extent, both in thought and in manner of expressing it. Indeed it is difficult to see how it could possibly have been otherwise.

## EMERSON AND HIS FRIENDS, THE CHILDREN

It is perhaps not an uncommon error to think of Emerson as a sort of rarified intellectual saint standing always aloof and isolated on the top of a column constructed of formidable books of metaphysical philosophy, oriental religions, and philosophical poetry. Nothing more conclusively shows the fallacy of this view than the fact of his sympathetic understanding of children and his fondness of them. In one of his essays he speaks of finding "a delight in the beauty and happiness of children that makes the heart too big for the body." What a delicate sympathy with the school-girl, mixed with charming humour, is in this passage from his essay on "Success" : "To-day at the school examination the professor interrogates Sylvina in the history class about Odoacer and Alaric. Sylvina can't remember but suggests that Odoacer was defeated; and the professor tartly replies, 'No, he defeated the Romans.' But 'tis plain to the visitor that 'tis of no importance at all about Odoacer and 'tis of a great deal of importance about Sylvina, and if she says he was defeated, why he had better a great deal have been defeated than give her a moment's annoy. Odoacer, if there was a particle of the gentle-

man in him, would have said, ' Let me be defeated, a thousand times '." In another essay on " Education," we find this tribute to boys : " I like boys, the masters of the playground and of the street. They know truth from counterfeit as quick as the chemist does. They detect weakness in your eye and behavior a week before you open your mouth, and have given you the benefit of their opinion quick as a wink. They make no mistakes, have no pedantry, but entire belief on experience. Their elections at baseball or cricket are founded on merit, and are right. They don't pass for swimmers until they can swim, nor for stroke-oar until they can row; and I desire to be saved from their contempt. If I can pass with them, I can manage well enough with their fathers."

In the life of Emerson written by Moncure D. Conway, entitled " Emerson at Home and Abroad," the author says of him, " His talk with any child that approached him was as gracious and dignified as his conversation with older people; and he was dear to all children that knew him, the number of whom was large. He was fond of festivities and pleasure parties including children, which formed important features of the Concord summers."

We have from Louisa Alcott the following childhood recollections of Mr. Emerson : " When we .(Louisa herself, and her sister

May) went to school with the little Emersons in their father's barn, I remember many happy times when the illustrious papa was our good play-fellow. Often, piling us into a bedecked haycart, he took us to pick berries, or bathe or picnic at Walden, making our day charming and memorable by showing us the places he loved, the woods-people which Thoreau had introduced to him, or the wild-flowers whose hidden homes he had discovered. So that when, years afterward, we read of 'the sweet *Rhodora* in the woods,' and 'the burly, dozing bumble-bee,' or laughed over 'The Mountain and the Squirrel,' we recognized old friends, and thanked him for the delicate truth and beauty which made them immortal for us and others."

Mr. James Elliot Cabot, Emerson's authorized biographer, tells us that while Emerson was closely intimate with no children but his own, he was warmly liked by the children of Concord generally, with whom he had wide acquaintance. Emerson visited their school and Sunday-school exhibitions, entering fully into the spirit of these and enjoying the parts taken by the children. He took pleasure in watching the boys and girls at their games, and was interested in the work they were doing at school. He liked, on occasions, to have them in his own home. When the village children met him on the street they would cross over from the side on which they

were walking to his side, to have the pleasure of meeting and greeting him. Although they never romped with him or took liberties (everything of that kind being limited to his own children) they dearly liked to take his hand, walk by his side and talk with him, being sure of his sympathetic understanding.

Mr. Emerson's daughter, Ellen, writes of the extraordinary intimacy which existed between her father and his own children, an intimacy which entered into their school life as well as their home life. "Our father's interest in every detail of our school affairs, our school politics and our school pleasures, was unbounded. We told him every word as we should have told our mates, and I think he had as much enjoyment out of it as we did. He considered it our duty to look after all the strangers that came to the school. At his desire we had large tea-parties at our house every year, and our duty was to make sure that all the out-of-town boys and girls came. He used to ask me, when I told him of a new girl: 'Did you speak to her?' 'No,' I answered, 'I hadn't anything to say.' 'But speak, speak, if you haven't anything to say,' he insisted. 'Ask her.—Don't you admire my shoe-strings?' And when they came to tea at our house he himself was always kind and friendly. 'Whom shall we invite to the berrying?' cried his young daughter one day, running into the house. 'All children from

six to sixty,' was his reply. On these occasions our father's most charming talk was with the children."

Mr. Emerson's interest in children and affection for them extended even to the youngest. His daughter declares that a baby could not be too young or small for him to hold in his arms. Carefully guarded as was the retirement of his study, his own babies were never excluded from it. An illustration of this is shown in the following extract from a letter to his absent wife : " February 19, 1838 . . . . Here sits Waldo beside me on the cricket, with mamma's best decanter-stand in his hand, experimenting on the powers of a cracked pitcher handle to scratch and remove crimson pigment. News comes from the nursery that our maid has taught him A and E on his cards, and that once he has recognized the letter T. Sitting here all roasted with the hot fire, he gives little sign of so much literature, but seems to be in good health, and has just now been singing, much in the admired style of his papa, as heard by you only on special occasions."

At holiday time Mr. Emerson joined in the children's pleasure over the presents to and from the small cousins in New York. He writes to his brother William, then living there : " Concord, February 3, 1845 . . . . Dear Brother : The precious gifts of the cousins to the cousins arrived as safely as such

precious parcels should. A happy childhood have these babes of yours and mine; no cruel interferences, and what store of happy days ! We cannot look forward far, but we must arm them with as much good sense as we can, and throw them habitually on themselves, as much as we can, for moral strength. I do not wonder that you and Susan delight in your boys. I spend a good deal of time on my little trinity,—for my own pleasure as well as theirs. Luckily, our interests are inseparable. Our happy study of the bewitching manners and character of the children is a most agreeable kind of self-knowledge."

Mr. Cabot calls particular attention to Emerson's care of his children, showing that he gave much more time and thought to their health, their comfort, their associations, their education, their play, everything that pertained to their welfare, than was common with New England fathers of that time. Emerson himself writes in his Journal : " There is nothing in the nursery that is not of the greatest interest to me. Every tear and every smile deserves a history, to say nothing of the stamping and screaming." He keeps a record of his children's little doings and sayings, as if they were of as much importance as the anecdotes of Plutarch. Says Mr. Cabot : " Their play, their work, their companions, their lessons, their outdoor rambles and their home occupations, were



objects of his constant care." Mr. Cabot also tells us that Mr. Emerson enforced the home discipline of his children by the gentlest and kindest methods. A childish quarrel, or outburst of petulance and silliness would be averted by a request to run into the study and see if the stove door was shut or to go to the front gate and look at the clouds for a minute.

Ellen Emerson writes of her father : " He taught us that at breakfast all must be calm, and sweet, nothing must jar; we must not begin the day with light reading or games; our first and best hours should be occupied in a way to match the sweet and serious morning."

" Great care was taken in the home to make Sunday a bright and happy day. There were church and Sunday-school in the morning. At the mid-day dinner, relatives or friends were likely to be present, which the children always enjoyed. Choice books were reserved for Sunday reading. A general air of quiet and thoughtfulness (but never gloom) prevailed in the home until two or three o'clock, after which the children were free to visit their friends or to receive visits, to play (but not boisterously) or, best of all, to take walks, oftenest with their father. Emerson's daughter Ellen has left glowing accounts of these walks. She writes : " Usually at about four, if the weather was

fine, father came into the front entry and whistled, or called out, 'Four o'clock,' and we all walked with him, from three to six miles, according to the walking and the flowers we went to see. When a rare flower was in bloom we went to find it in Becky Stow's Hole, or in Conventum, Mr. Channing giving the names to the spots. Our father was full of pretty speeches about what we were to see, making it a great mystery. Once I expressed my fear that he would cut down his Walden grove, or sell it. He answered, 'No, it is my camel's hump. When the camel is starving in the desert and can find nothing else, he eats his own hump. I shall keep these woods till everything else is gone'."

In his essay on Education, Emerson has given fine expression to his respect for childhood and youth, and his ideas of the opportunities for self-development that education ought to afford them. This essay might well be recommended as a guide and inspiration to teachers and parents to-day, so wise is it and so uncompromising in applying to education those principles of child-psychology which the most progressive educators of our time hold fundamental but which the majority of our homes and our schools fail to exemplify. Says Emerson in this essay: "The secret of education lies in respecting the pupil. It is not for you to choose what he shall know, what he shall do. By your tam-

pering and thwarting and too much governing he may be hindered from his end and kept out of his own. Respect the child. Be not too much his parent. Trespass not on his solitude. I suffer whenever I see that common sight of a parent or senior imposing his opinion and way of thinking on a young soul to which they are totally unfit. Cannot we let people be themselves, and enjoy life in their own way? You are trying to make that man another *you*. One's enough. Or we sacrifice the genius of the pupil, the unknown possibilities of his nature, to a neat and safe uniformity."

Again, in the same essay, Emerson voices a criticism of contemporary education, that is, alas, as true of our time as of his, and points to the ideal that education should strive for,—an idea that we are still far from attaining. "Our culture has truckled to the times, —to the senses. It is not man-worthy. It does not make us brave or free. We teach boys to be such men as we are. We do not teach them to aspire to be all they can. We do not give them a training as if we believe in their noble nature. We scarce educate their bodies. We do not train the eye and the hands. We exercise their understandings to the apprehension and comparison of some facts, to a skill in numbers, in words; we aim to make accountants, attorneys, engineers; but not to make able, earnest, great-hearted

men. The great object of education should be commensurate with the object of life. It should be a moral one; to teach self-trust; to inspire the youthful man with an interest in himself; with a curiosity concerning his own nature; to acquaint him with the resources of his mind, and to teach him that there is all his strength, and to inflame him with a piety towards the Grand Mind in which he lives."

## **THE TRANSCENDENTAL CLUB, THE DIAL AND BROOK FARM**

A remarkable group of New England literary men and women, following the lead of Emerson and William Ellery Channing, formed in 1836 what was known as the Transcendental Club. It was very loosely organized, hardly a club in the ordinary sense, and it held together only a few years, but its influence on American thought of that day was important. The time was one of extraordinary ferment,—intellectual, religious, moral, social, scientific, industrial. New reform movements and new plans and methods for the betterment of society were springing up in every direction. The anti-slavery movement was attaining much activity and heat. The cause of world-peace (anti-war) was agitating many minds. The growing sciences of astronomy and geology were making havoc of old ideas of creation. There was increasing revolt against Calvinism and creeds of all kinds. Unitarianism and Universalism were starting. Temperance movements were coming to the front. More rights were being demanded for women. Better treatment of the insane and of the Indians, prison reform, education for the blind, deaf and dumb, more adequate education for girls and young

women, free public schools, socialistic and communistic schemes for ameliorating or abolishing poverty,—all these and other movements and plans for the social betterment—some of them important and lasting, some impractical and short-lived,—were attracting the attention and absorbing the thought of the people of Boston, of New England, and, to some extent, of all America.

To many of the leading minds of New England, thus reaching out in all directions for something new, the transcendentalism of England and Germany, introduced by Channing, Emerson and others of their group, seemed inspiring and satisfying. It offered a welcome antidote for the barren orthodoxy and materialism controlling the religious thought of the period.

Transcendentalism was the philosophy of Kant, interpreted and modified by Goethe, Coleridge and Carlyle and, on this side of the ocean, by Emerson, Channing and others of their circle. It was idealism, as contrasted with materialism. It interpreted the universe spiritually. It made intelligence and reason the basis of reality. Emerson in his address on the Transcendentalist, said of it, "What are called new views here in New England are not new but are the very oldest of thoughts cast into the mould of these new times."

The Transcendental Club was an infor-

mal association of the New England writers and thinkers who were interested in this new philosophy. They naturally drew together for conference and discussion, at first two or three, then gradually more. Dr. Channing was their first leader, but Emerson came to be looked upon as the outstanding representative of the movement. The first meeting of the Club was at the home of George Ripley, then a prominent clergyman in Boston. It was called, at the beginning, "The Symposium," later "The Hedge Club" after Frederick Hedge, a Unitarian minister in the group, who later was a professor in Harvard Divinity School. But the name "Transcendental Club" was finally given it and became permanent.

The members called themselves the "Club of the like-minded." James Freeman Clarke, who was one of them, said, "I suppose it was because no two of us thought alike." Perhaps it would be truer to say that in spite of differences of opinion, they were united in a common impatience with routine thinking.

From the beginning, the Club attracted considerable public attention because of its, at that time, radical thought and because of the eminence of the men and women who belonged to it. In addition to Emerson and Channing, George Ripley, Frederick Hedge and James Freeman Clarke, there were Theo-

dore Parker, Bronson Alcott, Henry D. Thoreau, Margaret Fuller, Elizabeth Peabody, O. A. Brownson, the distinguished Catholic writer, and a few others.

During the four years of the Club's existence Emerson attended its meetings with faithfulness and interest, and whatever he said always had great weight with the other members. Now and then he gently plucked a feather from the wings of a member who got to soaring too high into the upper air of idealistic philosophizing. Though an arch-Transcendentalist himself, Emerson often poked fun at Transcendentalists—fun which, though sometimes keenly sarcastic, was never bitter and had within it a subtle appreciation. Someone has defined Transcendentalists as persons who try to obey Emerson's oft-repeated, cryptic injunction, "Hitch your wagon to a star," but who, in their eagerness for the star, forget about the wagon. Not so Emerson himself, who back of all else was a keen Yankee and "hugged his fact"; his wagon always jogged along serenely on the solid earth, though he never lost sight of the star forever shining before him. So in the midst of all his idealistic philosophizing, he could humorously remark: "A man must have aunts and cousins, must buy carrots and turnips, must have barn and woodshed, must go to market and to the blacksmith shop, must saunter and sleep and be inferior and silly."



Charles Dickens interested himself in the Transcendentalists and resolved to find out at first hand what they were. In his "American Notes" he wrote: "There has sprung up in Boston a sect of philosophers known as Transcendentalists. On inquiring what the appellation might be supposed to signify, I was given to understand that whatever was unintelligible would certainly be transcendental. Not deriving much comfort from this elucidation, I pursued the inquiry still further, and found that the Transcendentalists are followers of my friend Carlyle, or, I should rather say, of a follower of his, Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson . . . . Transcendentalism has its occasional vagaries (what school has not?), but it has good healthful qualities in spite of them; not least among the number a hearty disgust of Cant, and an aptitude to detect her in all the million varieties of her everlasting wardrobe, and therefore, if I were a Bostonian, I think, I would be a Transcendentalist."

Out of the Transcendental Club grew the little quarterly magazine called *The Dial*. The members of the Club were mostly young, ranging in age from twenty-two to forty, and they were eager to have an organ through which they might disseminate their idealism and perhaps do something toward inspiring freer thought and richer spiritual life in America. Apparently, too, the members of the

Club felt the need for a medium of self-expression, for clarifying their own thought and for communicating with each other. Emerson in his introductory article to the first number said that "the present conductors of this work . . . have obeyed, though with great joy, the strong current of thought and feeling, which, for a few years past, has led many sincere persons in New England to make new demands on literature, and to reprobate that rigor of our conventions of religion and education which is turning us to stone, which renounces hope, which looks only backward, which asks only such a future as the past, which suspects improvement, and holds nothing so much in horror as new views and the dreams of youth."

In after years Emerson wrote of *The Dial* : "It had its origin in a club of speculative students who found the air in America getting a little too close and stagnant; and the agitation had, perhaps, the fault of being too secondary and bookish in its origin, or caught, not from primary instincts, but from English, and still more from German, books. The journal was commenced with much hope, and liberal promises of many co-operators. But the workmen of sufficient culture for a poetical and philosophical magazine were too few; and as the pages were filled by unpaid contributors, each of whom had, according to the usage and necessity of this country, some pay-

ing employment, the journal did not get his best work, but his second best. Its scattered writers had not digested their theories into a distinct dogma, still less into a practical measure which the public could grasp; and the magazine was so eclectic and miscellaneous that each of its readers and writers valued only a small portion of it. For these reasons it never had a large circulation and it was discontinued after four years. But *The Dial* betrayed, through all its juvenility, timidity, and conventional rubbish, some sparks of the true love and hope, and of the piety to spiritual law, which had moved its friends and founders; and it was received by its early subscribers with almost a religious welcome. . . . In 1848, the writer of these pages found it holding the same affectionate place in many a private book-shelf in England and Scotland which it had secured at home."

*The Dial* was started in 1840, after many months of deliberation. Margaret Fuller was its first editor and some of her best writing was published in it. When she was obliged by ill health to give it up, Emerson himself became its editor, with Thoreau as his associate. Thoreau was but twenty-three years old when *The Dial* was launched and, from the first, contributed to almost every number. It thus became the means of introducing this young writer to the public.

During the four years of its existence the little quarterly brought out some of the best of Emerson's poems and several of his important essays. All the other members of the Transcendental Club contributed to it and among these contributions was considerable notable work beside that of Emerson, Thoreau and Margaret Fuller.

Emerson sent a copy of the first number of *The Dial* to Carlyle. Carlyle answered : " The Dial Number came duly. Of course I read it with interest; it is the utterance of what is youngest in your land, pure, ethereal as the voices of the morning. And yet—you know me—for me it is too ethereal, speculative, theoretic; all theory becomes almost a kind of mockery to me."

Whatever value and influence *The Dial* had was due more to Emerson than to anyone else. Though there was some youthful immaturity in it, there was also much of striking originality and merit. George Wills Cooke, one of Emerson's biographers, writing in 1881, sums up its merits as follows : " It was the first American periodical to assume a character and aim of its own. However many its deficiencies, in spite of all the sport it gave the critics, its influence was wholesome and vigorous. It quickened thought, gave its writers freedom of expression, and greatly stimulated originality. The school of writers which it formed and brought before

the public has been the most productive and helpful we have yet seen in this country."

We have the authority of Emerson himself for the statement that the Transcendental Club was the source not only of *The Dial* but also of Brook Farm. He himself did not enter as actively and whole-heartedly into this second undertaking as into the first. While he sympathized with certain aspects of it, he was critical of others.

Brook Farm was established in 1841, the year after the first publication of *The Dial*. George Ripley, Charles Dana, William Henry Channing, William Ellery Channing, Theodore Parker, Hawthorne and Bronson Alcott were among the leaders in it. Other men and women joined with these and an association was formed which purchased a farm in West Roxbury. Here buildings to house the members and their families were put up and a communistic community was started. Emerson wrote of it: "There was, no doubt, great variety of character and purpose in the members of the community. It consisted in the main of young people, few of middle age and none old. Those who inspired and organized it were, of course, persons impatient of the routine, the uniformity, perhaps they would say the squalid contentment of society around them which was so timid and skeptical of any progress." Their idea was that by thus uniting in com-

munity living they could each have a share in the physical labor upon which life depends and so bring about an ideal combination of mental work and bodily work, of toil and leisure, with the solace and pleasure of companionship always at hand. Though the original sources of the idea were the French Utopians, Claud Saint-Simon and Francis Fourier, and the Englishman Robert Dale Owen, yet at Brook Farm it was worked out in a purely New England fashion. It was more simple in its organization and more free and spontaneous in its activities than the communities established in Europe under the direct influence of Saint-Simon, Fourier or Owen. For two years it kept its original simplicity and freedom,—and this was perhaps the happiest part of its history. Then under the influence of certain new members who were ardent followers of Fourier, a new Constitution was adopted, which made the association a little more formal, a little more of a business undertaking, a little less free and spontaneous, and, seemingly a little less content and happy.

The two hundred acres in Brook Farm consisted of land that was not first quality,—land which required much hard work to make it satisfactorily productive. The aim was to make the farm pay. Mr. Ripley had considerable knowledge of advanced agricultural methods which he endeavored to carry into

operation. Farm produce was to be sold as a source of revenue. There was also a workshop in which several kinds of useful articles were manufactured to be sold outside. The community published a paper called *The Harbinger*, with Mr. John Dwight as editor. All adults in the colony were expected to perform a given number of hours of manual labor of some kind, generally choosing their own kind. For this they were allowed pay, the same amount for men and for women.

There was a keen literary life; the best books were read and discussed. Lecturers were brought from Boston and elsewhere to speak in diverse subjects. There was a happy social life, with many parties, dances and other gatherings. The novelty of the place brought frequent visitors, who were liable to come at almost any hour of day or night. They were always hospitably entertained. Emerson says, "Of course every visitor found that there was a comic side to this Paradise of shepherds and shepherdesses. There was a stove in every chamber and everyone might burn as much wood as he or she could saw. The ladies took cold on washing-day; so it was ordained that the gentlemen-shepherds should wring and hang out the clothes, which they punctually did. And it would sometimes occur that when they danced in the evening, clothespins dropped plentifully from their pockets." Again, he

tells us, "Married women, I believe, uniformly decided against the community. It was to them like the brassy and lacquered life in hotels. The common school was well enough but to the common nursery they had grave objections. Eggs might be hatched in ovens, but the hen on her own account much preferred the old way. A hen without her chickens was but half a hen."

A school was established for the colony with educational ideals that were high, and, for the most part, with excellent teachers,—Mr. and Mrs. Ripley, Mr. Dwight and Mr. Dana making themselves a part of the active teaching group. The school accepted pupils from outside at purposely low tuition rates, and its course extended from primary to college-preparatory work. George William Curtis, who in his youth spent some time at the Farm, was an advanced pupil in the School, and in his later life looked back to it with warm interest, declaring that it gave him the most valuable part of his education.

The community was small at first, numbering about twenty; later it increased to seventy. As time went on, applicants for membership increased until there were more than could be received. The original idea of a small and simple project gradually changed and at length after some debate it was decided to erect a large building to be the headquarters of the project and the center of the com-



munity activities. This involved a large expense and money had to be borrowed to do it. Possibly all might have turned out successfully had it not been for a sudden calamity. Before the new building was completed it caught fire and burned to the ground. This was a blow that staggered everyone. Though the community went on with its activities as usual for a time, hope and courage were dampened. It was not long before members began one by one to withdraw, as from a sinking ship, and to seek homes and employment elsewhere. All saw that the end was not far off. Emerson tells us, "The society at Brook Farm existed, I think, about six or seven years and then broke up; the farm was sold, and I believe all the partners came out with pecuniary loss. Some of them had spent on it the accumulations of years. I suppose they all, at the moment, regarded it as a failure. I do not think they so regard it now, but probably as an important chapter in their experience which has been of lifelong value. What knowledge of themselves and of each others, what various practical wisdom, what personal power, what studies of character, what accumulated culture many of the members owed to it!"

A summing up of the merits of the Brook Farm experiment is the following passage from Emerson: "The founders of Brook Farm should have the praise, that they made

what all people try to make, an agreeable place to live in. All comers, even the most fastidious, found it the pleasantest of residences. It is certain that freedom from the household routine, variety of character and talent, variety of work, variety of means of thought and instruction, art, music, poetry, reading, masquerade, did not permit sluggishness or despondency; broke up routine. There is agreement in the testimony that it was, to most of the associates, education; to many, the most important period of their life, the birth of valued friendships, their first acquaintance with the riches of conversation, their training in behaviour."

## EMERSON AND THE CHANNINGS

Out of Emerson's connection with the Transcendental Club grew many of his warmest friendships. To Dr. William Ellery Channing more, perhaps, than to anyone else was due the formation of that Club. Dr. Channing had already been for some years a friend and counsellor to Emerson, guiding the course of his theological training and influencing powerfully his religious thought. To the young Emerson, Channing was an ideal and an inspiration; the character and the utterances of the older man stirred all that was deepest and finest in the younger. In their later association in connection with the formation and the gatherings of the Transcendental Club, the early bond between them was cemented and matured. Channing was somewhat more inclined to be conservative in his mental attitude than Emerson but he respected the younger man's radical views even if he could not always agree with them.

Channing began his public life as minister of an orthodox Congregational church,—his own belief being a mild Calvinism. But he had a mind of great independence and courage which inevitably sympathized with the rising tide of revolt against the intellectual tyranny and shocking ethics of the old

Calvinistic creed. Daring to think for himself and to trust the dictates of his own reason and his own moral nature, he little by little became a leader in the movement, which had long been gathering force, to give New England a new theology with more reasonable and more ethical views of God and man and the universe.

There was a steady progress in his thinking up to the very end of his life. Beginning with a theology that hardly differed from the conservatism of his time, he gradually advanced until he reached in his later years the morally and spiritually rich radicalism which came to full flower in Emerson and Theodore Parker. Both these great prophet souls were true spiritual sons of Channing. There were others but the voices of these two were heard farthest and most deeply thrilled men. On these two more truly than on any others the mantle of the great Elijah fell.

In his "Historical Notes of Life and Letters in New England," Emerson wrote of this revered teacher and friend, "Dr. Channing, while he lived, was the star of the American church, and we thought then, if we do not still think, that he left no successor in the pulpit. He could never be reported, for his eye and voice could not be printed. . . . We could not then spare a single word he uttered in public; not so much as the reading of a

lesson in scripture, or a hymn, and it is curious that his printed writings are almost a history of the times; as there was no great public interest, political, literary or even economic, on which he did not leave some printed record of his brave and thoughtful opinion. A poor little invalid all his life, he is yet one of those men who vindicate the power of the American race to produce greatness."

Such a passage as the following characteristic utterance from Dr. Channing's writings shows the kind of guide this great man was for the thinkers of his time :

"One sublime idea has taken strong hold of my mind. It is the greatness of the soul, its divinity, its union with God. I cannot but pity the man who recognizes nothing God-like in his own nature. I see the marks of God in the heavens and the earth, but how much more in a liberal intellect, in magnanimity, in unconquerable rectitude, in a philanthropy which forgives every wrong and never despairs of human virtue.

"All men want freedom. What is it to be free ? I call that mind free which masters the senses, which passes life not in asking what it shall eat and drink but in hungering, thirsting, and seeking after righteousness. I call that mind free which does not copy the past nor live on old virtues but forgets what is behind and rejoices to pour itself forth in

new exertions. I call that mind free which jealously guards its intellectual rights, calls no man master, contents itself with no hereditary faith; receives new truth as an angel from heaven, and while consulting others, inquires still more of the oracle within itself. I call that mind free which sets no bounds to its love, recognizes in all human beings the image of God, and offers itself willingly and with joy to the service of mankind."

Is it any wonder that such words as these thrilled the young men of Boston and New England, and that the young Emerson caught their fire ?

When this man who had been such an inspiration to him died, Emerson wrote : " Dr. Channing was a man of so much rectitude and such power to express his sense of right that his value to the country, of which he was a kind of public conscience, can hardly be overestimated. His interest in the times, and the fidelity and independence with which, for so many years, he had exercised that censorship on commercial, political and literary morals, which was the spontaneous dictate of his character, had earned for him an accumulated capital of veneration, which caused his opinion to be waited for in each emergency, as that of the wisest and most upright of judges."

Some years after Channing's death the building of a Channing Memorial Church

was begun in Boston. Though Emerson was then an old man and feeble (for it was but two years before his own death), he made the journey from Concord to Newport in order to be present at the laying of the corner-stone in honor of the friend whom he had so loved and revered.

There were two other members of the Channing family among Emerson's friends,—William Henry, a nephew of Dr. Channing, and William Ellery, another nephew, named after the great preacher. Both belonged to the group of Transcendentalists. They were prominent in the religious and literary circles of their time but neither of them possessed an intellectual power or exerted an influence upon the religious thought of the world comparable to that of the older Channing.

William Henry Channing was, like his famous uncle, a Unitarian preacher. He was pastor of several American churches, including the Unitarian church in Washington, D.C., and he succeeded the eminent Dr. James Martineau in his church in Liverpool, England. He was author of the most complete and authoritative biography of Dr. Channing.

His interest in Brook Farm was keen and he was a frequent visitor there. Emerson

and he had many common interests,—through their experiences in the Unitarian ministry, through their interest in Transcendentalism and in Brook Farm, and through their mutual admiration of Dr. Channing.

The other nephew, William Ellery, lived for many years in Concord and was perhaps Emerson's most intimate friend after Thoreau. He was a poet and, though most of his poems are now forgotten, Emerson and others among his contemporaries found originality and beauty in many of them.

Ellery Channing was Emerson's favourite companion for long walks. "Yesterday," says Emerson in his Journal, "a walk with Ellery to the Lincoln Mill Brook, to Nine-Acre Corner, and Conantum. It was the first right day of summer. Air, cloud, river, meadow, upland, mountain, all were at their best. We took a swim at the outlet of the little brook at Baker Farm. Ellery is grown an accomplished professor of the art of Walking, and leads like an Indian." Again he writes: "I go twice a week over Concord with Ellery, and, as we sit on the steep park at Conantum, we still have the same regret as oft before. Is all this beauty to perish? Shall none re-make this sun and wind, the sky-blue river, the river-blue sky; the yellow meadow spotted



with sacks and sheets of cranberry-pickers; the red bushes; the iron-gray house with just the color of the granite rock; the paths of the thicket, in which the only engineers are the cattle grazing on yonder hill; the wide, straggling, wild orchard in which Nature has deposited every possible flavor in the apples of different trees ? . . . We say, where is he who is to save the present moment, and cause that this beauty be not lost ? Shakespeare saw no better heaven or earth, but had the power and need to sing, and seized the dull ugly England, ugly to this, and made it amicable and enviable to all reading men, and now we are fooled into likening this to that; whilst, if one of us had the chanting constitution, that land would no more be heard of."

Later we find this entry in the Journal : "Yesterday with Ellery walked through 'Becky Stow's Hole,' dry-shod, hitherto a feat for a musk-rat alone. The sky and air and autumn woods in their early best. This year the river meadows all dry and permeable to the walker. But why should Nature always be on the gallop ? Look now and instantly or you shall never see it; not ten minutes repose allowed. Incessant whirl. And 'tis the same with my companion's genius. You must carry a stenographic press in your pocket to save his commentaries on things and men, or they are irrecoverable. I tormented my memory just now, in vain to

restore a witty criticism of his, yesterday, on a book."

Emerson esteemed highly Ellery Channing's literary judgment and taste. He writes, again in his Journal: "There are men whose opinion of a book is final. If Ellery Channing tells me, 'Here is a good book,' I know I have a day longer to live. But there are plenty of able men whose report in that kind is not to be trusted."

William Ellery Channing's affection and admiration for Emerson are voiced in his poem on Emerson containing the following lines:

"Oh, such a heart was his! No gate or bar,—  
The poorest wretch that ever passed his door  
Welcome as highest king or fairest friend  
To all his store and all the world beside!  
For if the genius of all learning flamed  
Aloft in those clear eyes,  
Yet in the sweet relations with his race  
Pure mercy lived.  
The merest waif from nothing, cast upon  
The shores of his rich heart, became a gem."

## EMERSON AND THEODORE PARKER

In a previous article we pointed out that, while the influence of Dr. Channing's religious thought appears in the writings of many of the younger men of his day, it was in Emerson and in Theodore Parker that the greatness of his inspiration found most adequate expression.

Theodore Parker was one of the group of friends who, as Emerson tells us, "began to be drawn together by sympathy of studies and aspiration" and "from time to time spent an afternoon at each other's houses in a serious conversation,"—thus forming what was afterward called the Transcendental Club. Emerson writes: "Theodore Parker was our Savonarola, excellent scholar, in frank and affectionate communication with the best minds of his day, yet the Tribune of the people, and the stout reformer to urge and defend every cause of humanity with and for the humblest of mankind."

He was born in Lexington, Massachusetts, and was the grandson of the Captain Parker who commanded the colonists at the battle of Lexington.

After a course in Liberal Arts and Theology at Harvard University, he became a Unitarian minister, settling first over a small

church in West Roxbury. There he attracted some attention as a young man who read and studied much, who was independent in his thinking, and who occasionally said and wrote things a little too liberal to please his more conservative ministerial brethren.

In 1841, Parker delivered in South Boston a sermon on "The Permanent and Transient in Christianity" which at once made him famous. It stands with Emerson's Divinity School Address for its powerful liberalizing influence upon religious thought in America,—though its immediate effect was to start a bitter controversy between the conservative and the radical thinkers of the day.

As result of the fame which this address gave him, he received an urgent call to Boston. Here he had a career of fourteen years of great and ever-growing influence, preaching first to hundreds in the Melodeon Hall and then, in Music Hall, to thousands. Besides speaking in Boston every Sunday to the largest congregation in America, he lectured all over the North, fighting a mighty battle against slavery and in support of other reforms. Of his work in the cause of anti-slavery, Forthingham says, "Probably no one—not Garrison, not Philips himself, did more to awaken and enlighten the conscience of the North."

At last, breaking down in health, he went to Italy in search of recovery, but died

in Florence, May 10, 1860, and was buried in the little Protestant Cemetery, near the graves of Mrs. Browning and Walter Savage Landor. On the monument which marks his grave is the following inscription :

"His name is engraved in marble,  
His virtues in the hearts of those he helped to free  
from slavery and superstition."

The friendship between Theodore Parker and Emerson began early in Parker's career. Emerson's Divinity School Address made a profound impression upon Parker. After listening to it, he wrote in his diary : "It was the most inspiring strain I ever listened to,—so beautiful, so just, so true, and terribly sublime." A little later he gave a lecture in Concord and spent an evening with Emerson, which he called a great event in his life. During his ministry in West Roxbury, he often walked to Concord for a day with Emerson, which was always a source of inspiration to him.

In an essay dated 1849, we find Parker writing of Emerson : "The culture of Emerson is cosmopolitan. He trusts himself, he trusts man, he trusts God. Hence he is serene; nothing disturbs the even poise of his character, and he walks erect. Nothing impedes him in his search for the true, the lovely, and the good. He has not written a line which is not conceived in the interest of

mankind. No faithful man is too low for his approval and encouragement; no faithless man too high and popular for his rebuke. Even Milton, great genius as he was, and great architect of beauty, has not added so many thoughts to the treasury of the race; no, nor been the author of so much loveliness. Emerson is a man of genius such has never appeared before in America, and but seldom in the world. No English writer, I think, is so original."

It is easy to understand the mutual admiration and life-long affection between these two great men. Their philosophy of life and their ideals were essentially the same. Both were deeply religious in their different ways. Both were earnest reformers,—religious, social and political,—but by methods which often seemed opposite. Both were daring fighters; Parker with the mighty spear of a Goliath; Emerson with the often still more effective sling of a David. Externally, two men could hardly be more unlike, but many who knew them have commented upon their inner likeness. Said Edwin D. Mead, "Emerson was Parker writing books. Parker was Emerson preaching in a pulpit." Said William C. Gannett: "What Emerson uttered without plot or plan, Theodore Parker elaborated to a system. What Emerson did gently, 'an iconoclast without a hammer, who took down our idols from their pedestals so

tenderly that it seemed like an act of worship,' Theodore Parker did as a strong son of thunder."

Emerson himself saw perhaps more clearly the differences between his friend's way of life and his own than he did the similarity in their thoughts and ideals. Immediately after Parker's death, Emerson wrote of him in his Journal: "Theodore Parker has filled up all his years and days and hours; a son of the energy of New England, restless, eager, manly, brave, early old, contumacious, clever. I can well praise him at a spectator's distance, for our minds and methods were unlike—few people more unlike. . . . He sacrificed the future to the present, was willing to spend and be spent; felt himself to belong to the day he lived in, and had too much to do than that he should be careful for fame. He used every day, hour and minute; he lived to the latest moment, and his character appeared in the last moments with the same control as in the day of his strength."

At a meeting held in Music Hall, Boston, in commemoration of Parker, Emerson spoke of this honored friend as follows:

"Theodore Parker was a son of the soil, charged with the energy of New England, strong, eager, inquisitive of knowledge, of a diligence that never tired, upright, of a haughty independence, yet the gentlest of companions; with decided opinions and plen-

ty of power to state them; rapidly pushing his studies so far as to leave few men qualified to sit as his critics. . . . It is plain to me that he has achieved a historic immortality here; that he has so woven himself, in these few years, into the history of Boston that he can never be left out of your annals. It will not be in the Acts of City Councils, nor of obsequious Mayors; nor in the State-house, the proclamations of Governors, with their failing virtue—failing them at critical moments—that coming generations will study what really befell; but in the plain lessons of Theodore Parker, in this Music Hall, in Faneuil Hall, or in Legislative committee-rooms, that the true temper and authentic record of these days will be read.

“The vice charged against America is the want of sincerity in leading men. It does not lie at his door. He never kept back the truth for fear to make an enemy.

“His ministry fell in a political crisis; in the years when Southern slavery broke over its old banks, made new and vast pretensions, and wrung from the weakness or treachery of Northern people fatal concessions in the Fugitive Slave Bill and the repeal of the Missouri Compromise. Two days, bitter in the memory of Boston, made the occasion of his



most remarkable discourses. He kept nothing back. In terrible earnest he denounced the public crime, and meted out to every official, high and low, his due portion. It was his great service to freedom. . . . Ah, my brave brother ! it seems as if, in a frivolous age, our loss were immense and your place cannot be supplied.

“The sudden and singular eminence of Mr. Parker, the importance of his name and influence, are the verdict of his country to his virtues. We have few such men to lose. Amiable and blameless at home, feared abroad as the standard-bearer of liberty, taking all the duties he could grasp, and more, refusing to spare himself, he has gone down in early glory to his grave, to be a living and enlarging power wherever learning, wit, honest valor and independence are honored.”

## EMERSON AND WILLIAM HENRY FURNESS

In the group of Unitarian ministers who were associated with the Transcendental Club was William Henry Furness. Emerson's friendship with him long antedated their Transcendental Club affiliation, having begun when both were boys.

William Henry Furness and Waldo Emerson (as Emerson was called in his boyhood) attended a Mrs. Whitwell's school in Boston when they were four to six years old. They were also playfellows in each other's homes. Emerson records as one of his earliest memories an afternoon spent by them together playing on the floor of his mother's room and, at the end, a supper made memorable by their being allowed cake.

Later, when they were ten and eleven years old, they attended together a school kept by a Master Webb, where Waldo's greatest delight was in writing verses about current events, especially about naval battles, such as the fight between "The Constitution" and "The Guerriere", and where William took equal delight in making drawings of the same. The boys worked hard at trying to acquire a creditable handwriting,—in which Waldo was not considered very successful. Late in life,

Dr. Furness records his vivid recollections of how at Mr. Webb's school, Waldo "labored over his copybook, with his tongue out of his mouth and working up and down with the strokes of his pen."

The ardent friendship between the two boys, formed in their earliest years, never ceased nor cooled. They corresponded all their lives and visited each other from time to time. In the year 1910 the son of Dr. William Furness, H. H. Furness, gathered together a large part of this correspondence and published it in a very charming volume, entitled, "Records of a Lifelong Friendship." There is no sentimental effusiveness in these letters, but there is everywhere evidence of an attachment that is real affection and that time has no power to change. Emerson's letters always begin with "My dear, good William," or other endearing words; they refer often to the dear old times and memories, tell all the family news, and inquire eagerly concerning news of William's family. Furness writes to Emerson, "I cherish all your affectionate words. Heaven bless you, dear friend." Both refuse to speak of themselves as growing old but keep up the play spirit of boyhood throughout their correspondence. Emerson's last letter to Furness was written for him by his daughter Ellen and, when she asked him what message she should send, he answered, "Immortal love !"

In this lifelong series of letters, full of sincere and affectionate friendship, we see revealed Emerson's warm and loving heart, so frequently hidden behind the restraint of expression which he usually practised.

In 1875, only five years before his death, when he was already declining in health and strength, Emerson made a journey to Philadelphia to visit once more (the last time) his childhood friend. Here, to his great delight, he was joined by another dear friend since boyhood, Mr. Samuel Bradford. The three, thus happily brought together, spent day after day talking over old times when they were boys together in Mrs. Whitwell's school, in the Boston Latin School, in Master Webb's writing class, and, later, in Harvard College.

Dr. Furness survived Emerson by a number of years. When Emerson died it was William Furness who conducted the funeral services in the home and spoke the last words of affection there over the silent form of him whose life had been so closely woven with his own.

## EMERSON AND JAMES FREEMAN CLARKE

A friend from the early years of Emerson's ministry to the end of his life was James Freeman Clarke, who was himself a prominent Unitarian minister and writer on religious subjects. During Dr. Clarke's long career in Boston, he and Emerson were associated in various common projects, various social and intellectual movements. Both were interested in the Transcendental movement and in Brook Farm and both wrote for *The Dial*. Both were members of the Saturday Club; both were active in the anti-slavery cause and other reforms of the time.

In a lecture delivered by Dr. Clarke in 1865 on "The Religious Philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson," we get an interesting glimpse of the impression made upon him (as well as on the community) by the early utterances of Emerson,—his Phi Beta Kappa and Divinity School addresses and his course of lectures, in Masonic Hall, Boston, in 1836. Said Dr. Clarke : "The majority of the sensible, practical community regarded him as mystical, as crazy or affected, as an imitator of Carlyle, as revolutionary, as a fool, as one who did not himself know what he meant. A small but determined minority, chiefly com-

posed of young men and women, admired him and believed in him, took him for their guide, teacher and master. I, and most of my friends, belonged to this class. Without accepting all his opinions, or indeed knowing what they were, we felt that he did us more good than any other writer or speaker among us, and chiefly in two ways,—first, by encouraging self-reliance, and, secondly, by encouraging God-reliance." Though the theological views expressed by Emerson at this time were more radical than Clarke could wholly accept, yet he felt the mental and spiritual stimulation in them, he admired Emerson's sincerity and courage and was moved by his deeply religious spirit.

James Freeman Clarke was born in Boston and, like Emerson, received his university education at Harvard, but he was seven years younger than Emerson. After graduation he went to Louisville, Kentucky, in the then "Far West," and laboured there five years as minister of a newly formed Unitarian church. Then he returned to Boston, where he built up a strong society (the Church of the Disciples) of which he was the pastor until his death in 1884.

While he was in Louisville, Clarke, in addition to his ministerial duties, published a small but vigorous and forward-looking monthly magazine. At this time the first of Emerson's poems were beginning to be circu-

lated in manuscript among his friends and came under the observation of Clarke. Realizing their high quality, he sought and obtained permission to put them into his magazine for the benefit of his readers. Thus, through James Freeman Clarke, Emerson's poetry was started on its world-wide circulation.

One of the directions in which Emerson and Clarke found much in common was the deep interest of both in the literature and philosophy of the Orient. Many of Emerson's poems reflect this interest and throughout his prose writings there are allusions to the eminent religious teachers and the sacred literature of Persia, Arabia, China and India. The same interest in the Orient appears in the studies and writings of James Freeman Clarke on comparative religion, particularly in his well-known volume, "Ten Great Religions,"—a book which has done an important work in furnishing American readers with intelligent and trustworthy information regarding the sacred books and great historic religions outside our own. The views of the two men regarding the various religions of mankind are not always the same, but the spirit of reverence and appreciation with which all are studied is similar in both.

In view of the intellectual sympathy existing between Emerson and Clarke, it is not surprising that, after the death of Margaret Fuller, the two co-operated (with the

assistance of William H. Channing) in preparing and publishing a memoir of her.

No difference of opinion between these two friends ever caused a rift in their friendship. While some of the other ministers associated with Emerson were antagonized by his advanced views, Freeman Clarke never wavered in his admiration of him. In a fine article on Emerson published soon after his death, Dr. Clarke thus portrays his great friend :

"Emerson, the strong soul, the tender soul, has gone on his way. He will always fill a niche in the Universal Church, as a New England prophet. He had the purity of the New England air in his moral nature, a touch of the shrewd Yankee wit in his speech, and the long inheritance of ancestral faith incarnate in his blood and brain. To this were added qualities which were derived from some far-off realm of human life,—an Oriental cast of thought, a touch of medieval mysticism, and a vocabulary derived from books unknown to our New England literature. No commonplaces of language are to be found in his writings; and though he read the older writers, he does not imitate them. He also, like the humble-bee, has brought contributions from remote fields, and enriched our language with a new and picturesque speech all his own."

James Freeman Clarke spoke the last



words of appreciation and affection at Emerson's funeral in 1882. Oliver Wendell Holmes in his *Life of Emerson*, thus comments : "The Reverend James Freeman Clarke delivered the closing address. There was hardly a living person more competent to speak or write of Emerson than this high-minded and brave-souled man, who did not wait until he was famous to be his admirer and champion."

Dr. Clarke spoke in part as follows :

"The saying of the Liturgy is true and wise, that 'in the midst of life we are in death.' But it is still more true that in the midst of death we are in life. We do not ever believe so much in immortality as when we look on such a dear and noble face as this which lies before us, now so still, which a few hours ago was radiant with thought and love. 'He is not here; he is risen.' That power which we knew,—that soaring intelligence, that soul of fire, that ever-advancing spirit,—*that* cannot have been suddenly annihilated with the decay of these earthly organs. God does not trifle with his creatures by bringing to nothing the ripe fruit of the ages, by the lesion of a cerebral cell, or some bodily tissue. Such was his own faith as expressed in his own great words :—

'Wilt thou not ope thy heart to know  
What rainbows teach and sunsets show ?

Verdict which accumulates  
From lengthening scroll of human fates,  
Voice of earth to earth returned,  
Prayers of saints that inly burned,—  
Saying, What is excellent,  
As God lives, is permanent;  
Hearts are dust, hearts' loves remain;  
Heart's love will meet thee again.'"

## **EMERSON AND THE HOARS—SAMUEL, GEORGE, ROCKWOOD & ELIZABETH**

There is an amusing story told of an incident involving Judge Rockwood Hoar and Emerson at a meeting of the Boston Saturday Club. Judge Hoar called the attention of the members to the fact that Concord had recently held its annual Agricultural and Horticultural Fair, and he added that he had entered, in the competition for a prize, a basket of fine pears he had raised. His hope of winning the prize, he said, lay partly in the excellence of the fruit and partly in the fact that his friend, Mr. Emerson, was one of the judges. He felt sure that Emerson would render a verdict in its favor because of the tree on which it grew. Several years before, Emerson, on visiting Judge Hoar's garden, had noticed that this pear tree was in a languishing condition and, drawing on his deep stores of horticultural wisdom, he solemnly informed the owner that more iron and more animal matter were needed in the soil. "Forthwith," said Judge Hoar, "I took his advice and planted all my old kettles and a cat and a dog at the root of the tree; and those pears were the result." He added that he had kept two favorite terriers ready to plant if necessary.

Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar was the second generation of famous Hoars in Concord. His father Samuel was also a lawyer of renown. Chief Justice Shaw said of Samuel Hoar that he was the most powerful lawyer in Massachusetts. He served his state as senator for two terms and was sent as Commissioner from Massachusetts to South Carolina in 1844 to challenge the constitutionality of certain laws relating to the imprisonment of free negroes. While there his anti-slavery views nearly cost him his life.

In his private life in Concord Samuel Hoar was an enthusiastic gardener who loved his flowers, vegetables and fruit, and he and Emerson were fond of comparing notes about their gardening successes or failures.

After his death Emerson wrote two biographical sketches of him for publication. They reveal how highly Emerson esteemed him and how important a place he held in his community. Emerson described him as "a man of simple tastes, plain and true in speech, with a clear perception of justice and a perfect obedience thereto in his action; of a strong understanding, precise and methodical, which gave him great eminence in the legal profession.—He combined a uniform self-respect with a natural reverence for every other man; so that it was perfectly easy for him to associate with farmers, and with plain, uneducated, poor men, and he

had a strong unaffected interest in farms, and crops and weathers and the common incidents of rural life. It was just as easy for him to meet on the same floor and with the same plain courtesy, men of distinction and large ability. He was open-handed to every charity and every public claim that had any show of reason in it.

"The strength and beauty of the man lay in the natural goodness and justice of his mind, which, in manhood and in old age, after dealing all his life with weighty private and public interests, left an infantile innocence, of which we have no second or third example,—the strength of a chief united to the modesty of a child. He returned from courts or congresses to sit down, with unaltered humility, in the church or in the town-house, in the plain wooden bench, where honor came and sat down beside him."

The two sons of Samuel Hoar were also lawyers and of no less eminence than he. George Frisbie, the second son, was twenty-three years younger than Emerson, so that his admiration for the seer of Concord was the veneration and affection of a younger man for his senior. He had a brilliant political career,—was for eight years a member of the United States House of Representatives and for twenty-four years a member of the United States Senate. He was a scholar of considerable renown, serving as president of

the American Historical Society and of the American Antiquarian Society, as well as regent of the Smithsonian Institution and trustee of the Peabody Museum of Archeology.

Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar was nearer Emerson's age and there was always a warm friendship between them. As neighbors in Concord and as members of the Boston Saturday Club, they saw much of each other except when Judge Hoar's duties as a member of the higher courts of Massachusetts and as attorney-general of the United States required his absence from both Concord and Boston.

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Concord Lyceum, Judge Hoar paid his friend the following tributes : " It was the felicity of the Lyceum, as it was the good fortune of the town, that Mr. Emerson came to live among us. He has delivered before the Concord Lyceum ninety-eight lectures. Distant be the day when this community shall be free to give full expression to its gratitude to him, and to the love and honor which his townsmen bear to him ! But our ceremony this day would be incomplete if I did not ask you to pause for a moment, and to think what the simple statement of these ninety-eight lectures means. What a wealth of intellectual treasure has been spread out before this people ! What keenness of analysis, what

treasures of wit and wisdom, what lofty and inspiring thought, what results of a noble life, are contained in these manuscript pages which he has read to us ! The presence of Mr. Emerson in Concord has been the education of the town. It has been its principal distinction in our generation."

Another member of this famous Concord family, who was a very dear friend of Emerson's, was Judge Rockwood Hoar's sister, Elizabeth. She was to have been the wife of Emerson's brother, Charles, who died suddenly a short time before their expected marriage.

Charles was generally regarded, by those who knew the Emerson brothers, as the most brilliant of the four. From all the accounts that we have of him there can be no question that he was a young man of extraordinary intellectual gifts and of the very finest character. George Frisbie Hoar wrote of him : " I suppose he was the most brilliant intellect ever born in the state of Massachusetts." Daniel Webster, in whose office he studied law, said of him that it would make no difference where he settled,—if he opened an office in the backwoods of Maine clients would throng after him.

Ralph Waldo not only loved him dearly but always looked up to him as a superior ! Charles had chosen the profession of law, and decided to take up its practice in Concord

partly in order that he and Ralph Waldo might be near each other. Indeed they had decided upon a closer intimacy still. Ralph Waldo was to build an addition to his house so that after Charles' marriage, the two families might have a single home. When all were looking forward with eager anticipation to the marriage and the consummation of this plan, Charles was stricken with a fatal illness. His death was the most painful blow ever experienced by Ralph Waldo except the later death of his own little son. Of course the blow was even more severe, if possible, to Elizabeth Hoar, left thus virtually a widow. She became to Ralph Waldo really a sister and was always as welcome in his home and as much beloved by his family as if the marriage had taken place.

Nor was his very high regard for her based solely on her relation to his brother. She was herself a very superior woman. He had known her long, and always had held her in high esteem. I find many references to her in his Journals and they are all of such nature as to show that in his thought and his regard she filled a niche quite distinct and precious. All who knew her seemed to feel that her character was strong and singularly beautiful. Emerson himself writes of her : " Elizabeth Hoar consecrates. I have no friend that I more wish to be immortal; her influence I cannot spare, but wish always to



have at hand for recourse." She is described as having "abundant sentiment without a touch of sentimentality." Emerson speaks of her "admirable fairness." •

The two had much in common intellectually. Emerson highly prized her literary judgment and often discussed literary subjects with her. Indeed he goes so far as to let us know that sometimes he prefers her judgment to his own and that in his writings there are not a few instances in which certain of his best sentences, if not his best thoughts, are quite as much hers as his.

J. Elliot Cabot, the biographer of Emerson, said that Elizabeth Hoar had "an unswerving balance of mind joined with entire evenness of ideas, which made her a most valuable counterpoise to the eager idealists who surrounded Emerson."

She was a frequent visitor in his home until his death, and no one was more welcome or more beloved, not only by Emerson himself but also by every member of his family.

In view of the many ties between the Hoar family and Emerson, it is not surprising that, when the great author died, his family chose Judge Hoar to deliver one of the two addresses at the funeral service in the Concord church. Here is a part of the eulogy he rendered to the memory of his immortal friend : "Wherever the English language is spoken throughout the world, the fame of him

whom we mourn today, is established and secure. Throughout this great land and from beyond the sea, will come innumerable voices of sorrow for the great public loss. But we, his neighbors and townsmen, feel that he was *ours*. He was descended from the founders of the town. He chose our village as the place where his lifelong work was to be done. It was to our fields and orchards that his presence gave such value; it was our streets in which the children looked up to him with love, and the elders with reverence. He was our ornament and our pride."

## EMERSON AND MARGARET FULLER

When, in 1840, the first number of *The Dial*,—child of the Transcendental movement,—appeared, Margaret Fuller was its editor. She had been identified with the movement and was considered one of its most brilliant interpreters. Emerson esteemed her highly and during her editorship she had the benefit of his assistance and advice and the assurance of contributions from his pen. In fact Emerson and Margaret Fuller herself were among its most generous contributors. In reminiscing about *The Dial*, in his "Life and Letters in New England," Emerson speaks of the "noble papers by Margaret Fuller" which were published in it. After her health obliged her to give up the editorship, Emerson himself assumed the responsibility, with Thoreau as his assistant.

Margaret Fuller was the daughter of a typical New England lawyer and politician who, after some years of public life, in the course of which he had held several offices of importance, gave up law and politics, left his home in Cambridgeport and retired to a farm, where he died, leaving a wife and a large family of children with little to live on. This placed a burden upon Margaret, the eldest daughter, and she met it by becoming a teach-

er in various private and public schools in Boston and Providence, in order to contribute toward the support of the family.

From her earliest years, her father had recognized in her a gifted child, and determined that she should have the best possible education. At six years of age she began the study of Latin and at thirteen Greek. Later she took up German, French and Italian and became more or less proficient in all. She was encouraged to read omnivorously the best books. As result of such forcing her health was permanently impaired, but she became a prodigy of learning.

Her brilliant intellect and her extraordinary knowledge attracted attention everywhere she went. In Boston, where she lived for several years as a teacher and writer, she held "Conversations" attended by the leading women of the city. She published two or three books, one of which, "Women of the Nineteenth Century," created a distinct sensation. It was a strong plea for a broader life for women, and especially for equal rights for men and women before the law. It was the first work of its kind to appear in America.

She wrote striking and able book-reviews for leading papers. These drew the attention of Horace Greeley, who, two years after she had given up the editorship of *The Dial*, induced her to come to New York and accept a place as literary critic on the *New*

*York Tribune.* There, for several years, she led an active and influential life, engaging in various philanthropies and social reforms, and writing reviews and other articles which made her known throughout this country and in England.

In 1846, when she was thirty-six years of age, she went to Europe, travelled widely, made the acquaintance of many distinguished people, and finally settled down for study and writing in Rome. There she married an attractive but impecunious Italian nobleman, Marquis Ossoli; took part with him (she as nurse, he as officer) in the defense of the city against the siege by the French, and on its capture, embarked for America with her husband, her child, and the manuscript of a book which she had written relating the history of the war in which she had participated. But she never reached her native land. The steamer on which she sailed was wrecked almost in sight of New York, most of those on board going down, including her husband, her child, herself and her manuscript.

Emerson's acquaintance with Margaret Fuller began when she came to Boston to teach in Bronson Alcott's school. He at once recognized her ability and was attracted by her brilliance and her learning. He invited her to his home where she became a frequent and welcome visitor.

While Emerson admired her gifts and

found her conversation in a high degree entertaining and stimulating, yet at first he discovered in her certain egotisms and eccentricities which were distasteful to him. Of one of her early visits he wrote : " She made me laugh more than I liked. I found something profane in the hours of amusing gossip into which she drew me. When I returned to my library I had much to think of the crackling of thorns under a pot. I did not wholly enjoy the presence of her rather mountainous *me*." However, later he writes : " But she soon became an established friend and frequent inmate of our house, and continued thenceforward, for years to come, once in three or four months to spend a week or fortnight with us. Her ready sympathy endeared her to my wife and my mother, each of whom highly esteemed her good sense and sincerity."

The more Emerson saw of her the better he liked her. Of her peculiar gifts he wrote : " She was an active, inspiring companion and correspondent; and all the art, the thought and the nobleness of New England seemed at that moment related to her and she to it. She was a welcome guest not only in my home but everywhere. The houses of her friends in town and country were open to her, and every hospitable attention eagerly offered. Her arrival was a holiday, and so was her abode. She stayed a few days, often a week, more seldom a month; and all tasks that could be

suspended were put aside to catch the favorable hour, in walking, riding, or boating, to talk with this joyful guest, who brought wit, anecdotes, love-stories, tragedies, oracles, with her, and with her broad web of relations to so many friends, seemed like a queen of some parliament of love, who carried the key to all confidences and to whom every question had finally been referred."

Again, in describing her visits at his home, he tells how in the evening she would come into the library and "many and many a conversation was there held whose details, if they could be preserved, would justify all encomiums. They interested me in every manner;—talent, memory, wit, stern introspection, poetic play, religion, the finest personal feeling, the aspects of the future, all followed each other in full activity, and left me, I remember, enriched and sometimes astonished by the gifts of my guest." And again he declares that, though he knew her intimately for ten years, he "never saw her without surprise at her new powers."

Miss Fuller became very fond of Emerson's children and we have her own words as to her great sorrow at the death of little Waldo, the rare boy whose loss was such a sore grief to his father. She wrote: "I am deeply sad at the going of little Waldo. I cannot yet reconcile myself to the thought that the sun shines on the grave of the

beautiful blue-eyed boy and I shall see him no more. I loved him more than any child I ever knew; he was of a nature more fair and noble."

Emerson's influence upon Margaret Fuller increased with their acquaintance. At first he appeared to her cold and intellectually aloof; he impressed her as having "faith in the universal but not in the individual man. As she knew him better, she learned that while he had indeed a great faith in the universal, he also had a mighty faith in the individual, and she could say: "My inmost heart blesses the fate that gave me birth in the same clime and time and that has drawn me into a close bond of friendship with him." Again she wrote of him: "Emerson's influence has been more beneficial to me than that of any other American. From him I first learned what is meant by an inward life. Many other springs have since fed the stream of living waters, but he first opened the fountain. Several of his sermons stand apart in my memory, like landmarks of my spiritual history. It would take a volume to tell what this influence has done for me."

There is plenty of contemporary testimony to the fact that Margaret Fuller possessed unusual qualities of both intellect and heart. Emerson stresses her "joyful conversation and large sympathy." The important place she held in the esteem of her generation



is shown by the fact that soon after her death a volume of Memoirs of her was compiled by men of such eminence as Emerson, William H. Channing and James Freeman Clarke, and biographies of her were written by Thomas Wentworth Higginson and Julia Ward Howe. Horace Greeley wrote of her : "Margaret Fuller was the most remarkable woman that America has yet known; the loftiest, bravest soul that has yet irradiated the form of American womanhood."

## EMERSON AND THE ALCOTT FAMILY

Among Emerson's closest friend in Concord was Amos Bronson Alcott, an idealist, a philosophical thinker of the Transcendental school, a social reformer, an educator, and a saintly soul. Emerson thought so highly of him that the praise he gives him seems almost extravagant to the modern reader who cannot know the spell of Alcott's winning personality, his fascinating and elevated conversation and his lofty character. In American literary history there have been few men who possessed so great a conversational gift of fluent, interesting and charming speech, as did Alcott. Sometimes when he soared into his idealistic philosophy his listeners, while fascinated by his flow of words, were left dazed, wondering what it was all about. Frederika Bremer, while visiting this country, attended a dinner where Bronson Alcott gave an address and afterward she wrote to a correspondent: "Alcott drank water; we drank—a fog."

Bronson Alcott was born on a farm in Connecticut, of plain but highly respected parents. He was self-educated, was a great reader, a vigorous and independent thinker and an ardent student, especially of human

nature. He supported himself by various kinds of labor until the age of twenty-four, when he turned to teaching and conducted schools in Bristol, Connecticut, Germantown, Pennsylvania, Philadelphia and Boston. It was in Boston, in 1834, when he was thirty-five years of age, that Emerson formed his acquaintance. Alcott had opened a school for the teaching of young children, with such able and remarkable assistants as Elizabeth and Sophia Peabody and Margaret Fuller. His method of teaching was largely by conversation with the constant aim of stimulating and developing the child's personality. The school met with favor among not a few of the most intelligent people of Boston. But everything about it was so new and strange that it excited much criticism. Elizabeth Peabody wrote a description of the school defending its methods. Emerson himself wrote a defense of Alcott and his educational philosophy saying, among other things : " Mr. Alcott has given proof of a strong mind and a pure heart. A practical teacher, he has dedicated, for years, his rare gifts to the science of education. . . . He aims to make children think, and, in every question of a moral nature, to send them back on themselves for an answer. He aims to show children something holy in their own consciousness. Mr. Alcott's methods can not be said to have a fair trial; but he is

making an experiment in which all the friends of education are interested."

The school was denounced by a considerable part of the press, was not successful financially, and after four or five years was given up, although Mr. Alcott had won the affections of his pupils, and his educational principles and methods had challenged widely the attention of students of pedagogy.

One more educational experiment he tried. Emerson, his invaluable friend, furnished the money for him to go to London to establish a school there. But England was no better prepared for his methods and theories than America, and his attempt failed.

His visit to London bore fruit of another kind, however, though this was finally no more successful. Returning from London he brought with him two Englishmen, in association with whom he bought a farm not very far from Boston, and started a communistic experiment somewhat similar to Brook Farm. But it soon broke down, leaving him and his family in a very impoverished condition.

After that he moved to Concord, at Emerson's request, where he lived the rest of his life, mainly devoting himself, with Emerson's assistance, to lecturing and conducting "conversations," in which he had considerable success.

During Mr. Alcott's stay in England, Carlyle wrote to John Sterling: "He is

doubtless a worthy man, but one of the absurdest I have ever seen. They say Emerson pays his expenses to this country. No unlikelier missionary has come across my field of vision." To another correspondent Carlyle wrote : " Alcott is a good man but a bore of the first magnitude." Again : " Alcott is a kind of venerable Don Quixote, whom nobody can laugh at without loving." This suggests the comment of Alcott's daughter Louisa who, thinking of her father's " genius," which soared so high and brought to his kitchen so few potatoes,—compared it to a " balloon, which all the rest of the family were forever trying to pull down to earth."

In contrast with these glimpses of the impracticability of the man, we find Emerson writing : " Alcott has more of the god-like in him than any man I have ever seen; I regard him the most extraordinary man and the highest genius of his time." In a volume entitled " Unpublished Writings of Emerson " we find him describing Alcott as follows : " Alcott attaches great importance to diet and government of the body; still more to race and complexion. He is an idealist and I should say a Platonist, if it were not doing injustice to give him any name implying secondariness to the highly original habit of his salient and intuitive mind. He has singular gifts for awakening contemplation and aspiration both in simple and in cultivated

persons. Though not learned, he is a rare master of the English language; and though no technical logician, he has a subtle and deep science of 'that which actually passes in thought, and thought is ever seen by him in its relation to life and morals. Those persons who are best prepared by their own habit of thought, set the highest value on his subtle perception and generalization.' In 1856, Emerson records in his Journal: "I do not know where to find, in man or book, a mind so valuable to faith as Alcott's. His own invariable faith inspires faith in others. . . For every opinion or sentence of Alcott a reason may be sought and found, not in his own will or fancy, but in the necessity of Nature itself, which has daguerred that impression on his susceptible soul. He is as good as a lens or a mirror. There are defects in the lens, and errors of refraction and position, etc., to be allowed for, and it needs one acquainted with the lens by frequent use to make these allowances; but it is the best instrument I have ever met." Mr. Emerson's son Edward adds: "My father's value for Mr. Alcott's high plane of thought and life, never blinded him to his defects." In fact Emerson once remarked, "Alcott is a tedious archangel."

Alcott's affection and reverence for Emerson were very great. In his "Concord Days" he thus speaks of the inspiration which those who were admitted to intimate associa-

tion with the master found in their intimacy with him : "Fortunate the visitor who is admitted of a morning for the high discourse, or permitted to join the poet in his afternoon walks to Walden, the Cliffs, or elsewhere,—hours to be remembered as unlike any others in the calendar of experiences."

The family of Bronson Alcott and the family of Emerson lived near each other in Concord and the friendship that existed between the two men existed also between the other members of both families. The Alcott home was a happy one—amazingly so when we consider its poverty and hardships and that during long periods the family were almost on the verge of starvation owing to the utter impracticability of its masculine head. He fed them on the highest quality of intellectual and spiritual food, and they loved and almost worshipped him. But he was helpless as a child when it came to doing the things necessary to earn money for bread and coal and house rent. Mrs. Alcott was an adept at making a dollar (when she had one) go the farthest possible. She wore her clothes until there were holes, and then mended the holes so neatly that nobody noticed them. She kept Mr. Alcott's coat mended and brushed. She made the girls' dresses over and turned them inside out, so as to keep them respectable, and trimmed their old hats over so that they looked like new. She

taught the girls to help in everything, and to save as carefully as she, which they were glad to do. But they never mentioned their poverty to others and never complained. Thus they made it elegant poverty. They welcomed into their home their neighbors and friends, serving them with the best they had, without apologies. Everybody liked them. The girls were popular with the young people of the village. The home was a headquarters for games, extemporized theatricals, good times and fun, Mr. and Mrs. Alcott encouraging it all, and often joining in. Ellen Emerson was a close associate with the Alcott girls in their festivities, and the plays were sometimes enacted in the Emerson home, with Mr. and Mrs. Emerson as happy spectators.

To the Alcott girls, who were eager readers, Mr. Emerson gave the free use of his library, where they, especially the romantic Louisa, found treasures as wonderful as were ever revealed by Aladin's lamp. Louisa tells us that very early she set Mr. Emerson up in her imagination as her hero and secretly wrote letters to him,—which she never sent. But in later years she told him of her young romance,—to his infinite amusement.

She tells us, too, that Emerson was the "wonderful friend" of the Alcott family, in ways that nobody outside knew, but that were very vital to them. Often they would have suffered severely but for him. Not only did



he exert himself constantly to find something for Mr. Alcott to do to earn money—lecturing, writing, etc., but he often drove the wolf from the door by substantial pecuniary help—always in ways least obtrusive, least embarrassing. Louisa relates that after a call from Mr. or Mrs. Emerson or Ellen it was the commonest of experiences to find under a book on the table, or under a lamp, or in some other place secret but certain to be discovered, one or more bills or gold-pieces, often of considerable size.

During many years an essential part of the support of the Alcott home had to be furnished by the women of the family, particularly by Louisa. To earn money she did sewing, taught school, did nursing (during the Civil War) and wrote short stories, and articles for periodicals. Her writings brought her small pay until she wrote "Little Women." That sprang at once into amazing popularity and from that time on the terrible financial load was lifted, both from her own shoulders and from those of the family. It was no wonder that Mr. Alcott, when asked what he regarded as his most important contribution to literature, answered, "My daughter Louisa."

When Mr. Emerson died in 1882, Louisa Alcott wrote in her diary: "Our best and greatest American has gone. He was the nearest and dearest friend my father has ever

had, and the man who has helped me most by his life, his books and his society. I can never tell all he has been to me, from the time when, a little girl, I sang under his window in the moonlight, and wrote secret letters to him as my hero, up through my hard years when his essays on Self-Reliance, Character, Compensation, Love and Friendship helped me to understand myself and life and nature and God. Illustrious and beloved friend, good by ! ”

She helped trim the church for the funeral, and herself made a beautiful lyre of golden jonquils.

Bronson Alcott read at the funeral a sonnet in which he expressed his admiration and devotion for this immortal friend :

“ His body is silent : shall successors rise,  
Touching with venturous hand the trembling string.  
Kindle glad raptures, visions of surprise,  
And wake to ecstasy the slumbering thing ?  
Shall life and thought flash new in wondering eyes,  
As when the seer transcendent, sweet and wise,  
World-wide his native melodies did sing,  
Flushed with fair Lopes and ancient memories ?  
Ah no ! That matchless lyre shall silent lie :  
None hath the vanished minstrel's wondrous skill,  
To touch that instrument with art and will.  
With him, winged poesy doth droop and die ;  
While our dull age, left voiceless, must lament  
The bard high heaven had for its service sent.”

After the services at the church and at the grave were over, Louisa Alcott sat down and wrote far into the night, preparing an

article on Ralph Waldo Emerson for *The Youth's Companion* in order that the children of America might know his greatness and the nobility of his life.

## EMERSON AND NATHANIEL HAWTHORNE

In Emerson's sketch of Brook Farm, he wrote : " In and around Brook Farm, whether as members, boarders, or visitors, were many persons remarkable for character, intellect or accomplishments " ; and, after mentioning some of them, he added : " There, too, was Hawthorne, with his cold, yet gentle, genius."

Though for many years Emerson and Hawthorne were neighbors in Concord, yet, strangely, they never became intimate. Hawthorne was a recluse and, while he enjoyed occasional walks with Emerson, he would not pay visits to his home. Emerson's son, Dr. Edward Emerson, tells this story : " Hawthorne once broke through his hermit usage and honored Miss Ellen Emerson, the friend of his daughter, with a formal call on a Sunday evening. It was the only time, I think, that he ever came to the Emerson house except when persuaded to come in for a few moments on the rare occasions when he walked with my father. On this occasion he did not ask for either Mr. or Mrs. Emerson but announced that his call was on Miss Ellen. Unfortunately, she had gone to bed ; but he remained for a time talking with my

sister Edith and me, the schoolmaster of his children. To cover his shyness he took up a stereoscope on the center-table and began to look at the pictures. After looking at them for a time he asked where these views were taken. We told him they were pictures of Concord houses, the Concord Common and the mill-dam; on hearing of which, he expressed surprise and interest; but evidently he was as unfamiliar with the center of the village where he had lived for years, as a deer or a wood-thrush would be. He walked through it often on his way to the cars, but was too shy or too rapt in his own thought to know what was there."

Of one of the long walks the two men took together, Emerson writes in his Journal : "September 27 (1842) was a fine day, and Hawthorne and I set forth on a walk. The days of September are so rich that it seems natural to tramp to the end of one's strength. Fringed gentians, a thorn-bush with red fruit, wild apple-trees whose fruit hung like berries, and grape-vines, were the decorations of our path.

"Our walk had no incidents. It needed none, for we were in excellent spirits and had much conversation. . . . We, sober men, easily pleased, kept on the outside of the land and did not by so much as a request of a cup of milk, creep into any farm-house. . . .

"Afternoon, we reached Stowe, and

dined, and then continued our journey toward the village of Harvard, making our day's walk, according to our best computation, about twenty miles. The last miles, however, we rode in a wagon, having been challenged by a friendly, fatherly gentleman who knew my name and my father's name and history. Next morning, we began our walk at six-thirty o'clock, for the Shaker Village, —distance three and a half miles. Whilst the good Shakers were getting ready our breakfast, we had conversation with two of the brethren, who gave us an honest account, by yea and by nay, of their faith and practice. From the Shaker Village we came to Littleton and thence to Acton, still in the same redundancy of splendor, finishing the nineteen miles of our second day before four in the afternoon."

Moncure Conway begins one of the chapters of his book, "Emerson at Home and Abroad," with this striking picture of the contrast between Hawthorne and Emerson :

"On a day in Concord I saw the two men whom Michael Angelo might have chosen as emblems of Morning and Evening, to be carved over the gates of the New World. Emerson emerged from his modern home, with 'shining morning face,' his eye beaming with its newest vision of the golden year. Hawthorne, at the other extreme of the village, came slowly out of the "Old

Manse,"—the grey-gabled mansion made famous by his genius—and stepped along the avenue of ancient ash-trees, which constituted a fit frame around him. A superb man he was—this Hawthorne! His erect, full and shapely figure might have belonged to an athlete, were it not for the grace and reserve. The massive forehead and brow, with dark locks on either side, the strong nose and mouth, might be the physiognomy of a military man or political leader—some man impelled by powerful public passions; but with this man there came through the soft eyes a gentle glow which suffused the face and spiritualized the form. No wonder such fascination held Hawthorne's college fellows to him! Longfellow used to talk in poetry when his early days at Bowdoin (college) with Hawthorne were his theme. As Hawthorne came down the avenue, unconscious of any curious or admiring eye, every step a leap, what were the trees whispering to him? Perhaps secrets of that "Old Manse"! It is almost a solemn reflection that in the same historic mansion and perhaps in the same room were written two books so famous, yet so strangely different, as Hawthorne's 'Mosses from an Old Manse' and Emerson's 'Nature'."

Emerson esteemed Hawthorne, the man, but for Hawthorne, the author, he had no praise. "I do not think any of Hawthorne's

books worthy of his genius," he said. "I admire the man, who is simple, amiable, truth-loving and frank in conversation, but I never read his books with pleasure; they are too young." He even went so far as to confide to his Journal,—“Nathaniel Hawthorne's reputation as a writer is a very pleasing fact, because his writing is not good for anything and this is a tribute to the man.” Again he wrote,—“Hawthorne invites his readers too much into his study, opens the process before them. As if the confectioner should say to his customers, ‘Now let us make the cake.’”

In the following comment by Emerson's son regarding his father's feeling toward Hawthorne, there is a hint at the explanation of Emerson's inability to appreciate Hawthorne's writings: “Mr. Hawthorne always interested my father by his fine personality, but the gloomy and uncanny twilight of his books was one in which Mr. Emerson could not breathe, and he never could read in them far.”

That Hawthorne had great admiration for Emerson is testified by these words of his in “Mosses from an Old Manse,” which are a very appreciative tribute to his distinguished neighbor: “It was good to meet him in the wood paths or sometimes in our avenue, with that pure intellectual gleam diffusing about his presence like the garment of a shining one; and he so quiet, so simple, so without



pretention, encountering each man alive as if expecting to receive more than he would impart. . . It was impossible to dwell in his vicinity without inhaling more, or less the mountain atmosphere of his lofty thought."

In May 1864, Hawthorne died in the midst of his work, leaving a book half written. Longfellow expressed in verse what all the novelist's friends doubtless felt :

"The lovely town was white with apple blooms  
And the great elms o'erhead,  
Dark shadows wove on their ethereal looms,  
Shot through with golden thread.

But the one face I looked for was not there,  
The one low voice was mute;  
Only an unseen presence filled the air,  
And baffled my pursuit.

There, in seclusion and remote from men,  
The wizard hand lies cold,  
Which at its topmost speed let fall the pen,  
And left the tale half told.

Ah ! who shall lift that wand of magic power,  
And the lost clue regain ?  
The unfinished window in Aladin's tower,  
Unfinished must remain."

In a letter to Mrs. Hawthorne soon after her husband's death, Emerson wrote : "I have had my own pain in the loss of your husband. He was always a mine of hope to me and I promised myself a rich future some day, when we should both be less engaged in

tyrannical studies and habitudes, and therefore when I could have unreserved intercourse with him. I thought I could well wait his time and mine for what was so well worth waiting. And, as he always appeared to me superior to his performances, I counted this yet untold force an insurance of a long life."

In his Journal he thus expressed his feelings : " I have found in Hawthorne's death a surprise and a disappointment. I thought him a greater man than any of his works betray, and that there was still a great deal of work in him, and that he might one day show a purer power. Moreover, I have felt sure that I could well wait his time, his unwillingness and caprice—and might one day conquer a friendship. It would have been a happiness, doubtless to both of us, to have come into habits of unreserved intercourse. It was easy to talk with him,—there were no barriers,—only he said so little that I talked too much and stopped only because, as he gave no indication, I feared to exceed. He showed no egotism or self-assertion,—rather a humility, and, at one time, a fear that he had written himself out. One day, when I found him on the top of a hill in the woods, he paced back the path to his house and said, ' This path is the only remembrance of me that will remain.' Now it appears that I waited too long."

The day after Hawthorne's funeral,

Emerson wrote in his Journal : " Yesterday, May 23 (1864), we buried Hawthorne in Sleepy Hollow, in a pomp of sunshine and verdure and gentle winds. James Freeman Clarke read the service in the church and at the grave. Longfellow, Holmes, Agassiz, Hoar, Dwight, Whipple, Norton, Alcott, Hillard, Fields, Judge Thomas and I attended the hearse as pall-bearers. The church was copiously decorated with white flowers delicately arranged. The corpse was unwillingly shown,—only a few moments, to this company of his friends. But it was noble and serene in its aspects,—a calm and powerful head. A large company filled the church and the grounds of the cemetery. All was so bright and quiet that pain or mourning was hardly suggested and Holmes said to me that it looked like a happy meeting. Clarke, in the church, said that Hawthorne had done more justice than any other to the shades of life, shown a sympathy with the crime in our nature, and like Jesus, was the friend of sinners. I thought there was a tragic element in the event that might be more fully rendered,—in the painful solitude of the man, which, I suppose, could not longer be endured, and he died of it."

On May 9, 1929, a bust of Hawthorne was unveiled in the New York University Hall of Fame. Professor William Lyon Phelps of Yale, giving the address for the occasion, thus

summed up the view American men of letters have come to hold of Hawthorne's literary rank :

“Hawthorne is our foremost creative literary artist; he stands alone on the heights, with no one to challenge his pre-eminence. He is not relatively but absolutely great, and has an unassailable place in the front rank of the novelists of the world. His reputation was never noisy, but it has steadily widened, and increases with the increase of years.”

## EMERSON AND THE SATURDAY CLUB

Emerson's social connections in Boston included several literary and philosophical clubs in which he enjoyed intellectual and social contacts with the leaders of American thought at that time. The Transcendental Club was one : another was the Town and Country Club; a third was the Saturday Club.

The Town and Country Club was composed of most of the people who had belonged to the Transcendental Club, together with perhaps a hundred others. Its first gatherings were arranged for the purpose of giving a hearing to Bronson Alcott who was then living in Boston and whose ideas were attracting much attention. Its membership was singularly miscellaneous,—in fact too diverse in character and interests to hold together long. Lowell, who was a member, said that it contained "everybody whom other folks think crazy, and who return the compliment. It is as if all the eccentric particles which had refused to revolve in the regular routine of the world's orbit had come together to make a planet of their own." Within a year or so the necessity of raising money to meet the expenses of the Club, brought it to a sudden end.

The Saturday Club was of a very different character. It seems to have originated in Emerson's custom of visiting Boston on the last Saturday of each month, to look over the new books at the "Old Corner Bookstore" (kept first by Phillips and Sampson and later by Ticknor and Fields). He was in the habit of dining, on these occasions, with his intimate friends, at the Albion Restaurant or the Parker House.

We have many, more or less complete, accounts of the Club, by Emerson, Lowell, Longfellow, Richard Henry Dana and others, in their diaries and elsewhere.

At the beginning it was limited to fourteen members, but after a few years the number began to be gradually expanded. Emerson's Journals make mention of the following members of the Club: Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, Judge Hoar, Agassiz, Pierce, Motley, Ward, Whipple, Dwight, Woodman, Hawthorne, Dana, Sumner, Appleton, Cabot, Hedge, Forbes, S. G. Howe and Estes Howe, Norton. There were no written rules and no records, and, except on special occasion, no papers or set speeches. The only object of the Club was to give its members an occasion to dine together once a month at Parker's and enjoy two or three hours of absolutely free and intimate conversation with one another. It required a unanimous vote to elect a member. Each

person present paid for his own dinner, so there was no need for funds or accounts. Guests were permitted, each member paying for the guest he brought; and guests were frequent,—generally men of distinction, sometimes from abroad. This was an interesting feature of the Club.

All the members were well acquainted, liked one another, and were never happier than when together. Dr. Holmes, writing about the Club to Motley, said: "It has proved to all of us a source of the greatest delight. I do not believe there ever were such agreeable periodic meetings in Boston as these we have at Parker's."

Dr. Holmes speaks of Emerson as usually sitting near the Longfellow end of the table "talking in low tones and carefully measured utterances to his neighbor, or listening and recording any stray word worth remembering, on his mental photograph." "I went to the Club last Saturday," wrote Holmes to Motley in April 1870, "and met some of the friends you always like to hear of. I sat by the side of Emerson, who always charms me with his delicious voice, his fine sense and wit, and the delicate way he steps about among the words of his vocabulary, at last seizing his noun or adjective,—the best, the only one which would serve the need of his thought."

"I well remember amongst other things," says Dr. Holmes again, "how the Club would

settle itself to listen when Dana had a story to tell. Not a word was missed, and those who were absent were told at the next Club what they had lost. Emerson smoked his cigar and was supremely happy, and laughed when the point of the story was reached."

The Club occasionally had special programs in recognition of usually interesting events. One of the most notable of these was in celebration of the Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz, at which original poems, written for the occasion, were read by Lowell, Holmes and Longfellow.

It has been said that to the Saturday Club belongs the credit for the founding of the *Atlantic Monthly*. This is too much to say but it is true that certain leading members of the Club were connected with the starting of that important magazine. Longfellow says that, May 5, 1857, he dined at the Parker House with Phillips, the publisher (of the firm of Phillips and Sampson) to talk about the new monthly that the latter was preparing to issue. Mr. Phillips wrote to a relative describing the occasion, as follows : " I must tell you of a dinner party I gave about two weeks ago. It would be proper, perhaps, to state that the origin of it was a desire to confer with my literary friends on a somewhat extensive literary project, the particulars of which I shall reserve till you come. My invitation included only R. W. Emerson, H.



W. Longfellow, J. R. Lowell, Mr. Motley (the Dutch Republic man), O. W. Holmes, Mr. Cabot and Mr. Underwood, our literary man. Imagine your uncle at the head of such a table, with such guests. The above named were the only ones invited, and they were all present. We sat down at three P. M., and rose at eight. The time occupied was longer by about four hours and thirty minutes than I am in the habit of consuming in that kind of occupation, but it was the richest time intellectually, by all odds, that I have ever had. Leaving myself and our 'literary man' out of the group, I think you will agree with me, that it would be difficult to duplicate that number of men of such conceded scholarship, in the whole country besides. Mr. Emerson took the first post of honor at my right, and Mr. Longfellow the second at my left. They all seemed so well pleased that when they adjourned, they invited me to meet them again tomorrow, when I shall again meet the same persons, with one other (Whipple, the essayist) added to the brilliant constellation of philosophical, poetical and historical talent. Each is known alike on both sides of the Atlantic, and is read beyond the limits of the English language. Though I say it that should not, it was the proudest day of my life."

Here, then, we have the definite beginning of the plans made by the Boston publish-

ing house which resulted in the founding of the *Atlantic Monthly*. These eminent literary men, thus consulted and enlisted in its support beforehand, insured that it would start with the highest possible prestige. Nearly all of them became contributors to it from the beginning. Lowell became its first editor. Emerson's contributions totaled thirty-eight, about half poetry, including some of his best-known poems.

In 1886, the Saturday Club, much enlarged and somewhat changed in its character, became incorporated, stating its purpose to be "the establishment and maintenance in Boston of a place for social meetings, and for having conversation and discussion upon historical, literary, scientific and artistic subjects, and to hold and expend any funds given or bequeathed for its support."

Emerson attended the Club regularly and greatly enjoyed the meetings; and he was wont to praise the brilliant conversation he heard there. He cared less to speak himself than to listen to the clever men about him. His connection with it continued until 1875, when his failing speech and memory rendered the meetings no longer attractive to him.

An interesting incident in the early history of the Saturday Club was the formation of a temporary organization called the Adirondack Club, which in August 1858 made an ex-

cursion into the then wilderness of the Adirondack Mountains, for a summer holiday outside the "cramping, galling, enslaving, artificial limitations of our modern civilization." The party consisted of Lowell, Agassiz, Emerson, Samuel Hoar, John Holmes, Wyman, W. J. Stillman, Estes Howe and Horatio Woodman. Lowell was the leader who planned the excursion, though Woodman, a man of more practical experience in such matters, was the manager. A rough hut was built on the shore of Follansbee Pond; flannel shirts were worn, fir boughs and blankets furnished the beds, and the fare was primarily the game and fish of the wilderness. After breakfast each morning there was shooting at a mark, which Agassiz once hit, though he had never before fired a gun, and refused to do so again. Emerson bought a rifle, but seems never to have used it. A guide one day paddled him out into the lake, and a deer was pointed out to him, but he did not shoot. Longfellow was to have been a member of the party, but finally refused to go, because he heard that Emerson had bought a gun. He said that a philosopher whose head was in the clouds was no man to have such a weapon. "Somebody will be shot." The trip was described by Emerson in his poem entitled "The Adirondacks," "dedicated to my fellow-travelers in August, 1858." Beneath this heading he set the quatrain :

"Wise and polite,—and if I drew  
Their several portraits, you would own  
Chaucer had no such worthy crew,  
Nor Boccace in Decameron"

*The Adirondacks*

Lines Dedicated to my fellow Travelers  
in Aug. 1858.

"We crossed Champlain to Keeseville with our friends,  
Thence, in strong country carts, rode up the forks  
Of the Ausable stream, intent to reach  
The Adirondack lakes. At Martin's Beach,  
We chose our boats; each man a boat and guide,  
Ten men, ten guides, our company all told.

By the bright morn the gay flotilla slid  
Through files of flags that gleamed like bayonets,  
Through gold-moth-haunted beds of pickerel-flower,  
Through scented banks of lilies white and gold,  
Where the deer feeds at night, the teal by day,  
On through the upper Saranae, and up  
Pere Raquette stream, to a small tortuous pass  
Winding through grassy shallows in and out,  
Two creeping miles of rushes, pads and sponge,  
To Follansbee Water and the Lake of Loon.

Northward the length of Follansbee we rowed,  
Under low mountains, whose unbroken ridge  
Ponderous with beechen forest sloped the shore.  
A pause and council; then, where near the head,  
Due east a bay makes inward to the land  
Between two rocky arms, we climb the bank,  
And in the twilight of the forest noon  
Wield the first axe these echoes ever heard.  
We cut young trees to make our poles and thwarts,  
Barked the white spruce to weatherfend the roof,  
Then struck a light and kindled the camp-fire.

'Welcome !' the wood-god murmured through the leaves,  
'Welcome, though late, unknowing, yet known to me.'  
Evening drew on; stars peeped through maple-boughs,  
Which o'erhung, like a cloud, our camping fire.  
Decayed millennial trunks, like moonlight becks,  
Lit with phosphoric crumbs the forest floor.

Ten scholars, wanted to lie warm and soft  
In well-hung chambers daintily bestowed,  
Lie here on hemlock boughs, like Sacs and Sioux,  
And greet unanimous the joyful change.  
So fast will Nature acclimate her sons,  
Though late returning to her pristine ways."

For twenty years or more the Saturday Club was the leading literary and social club of Boston. Starting with its original fourteen distinguished members, it gradually drew into itself most of the men of brilliant parts and literary reputation who lived in or near Boston. We to-day may well share the regret which Longfellow expressed when he wrote of the Club, with a sigh : " Unfortunately, it had no Boswell and many of its golden hours have passed unrecorded."

## EMERSON AND OLIVER WENDELL HOLMES

At one of the meetings of the Saturday Club, Dr. Holmes paid a tribute in verse to his friend, Emerson, of which the following lines are a part :

"Where in the realm of thought, whose air is song,  
Does he, the Buddha of the West, belong?  
He seems a winged Franklin, sweetly wise,  
Born to unlock the secrets of the skies.  
Ask you what name this Earthly Spirit bears  
While with ourselves this fleeting breath it shares?  
Till angels greet him with a sweeter one  
In Heaven, on earth we call him Emerson."

This friendly admiration was reciprocal and we find Emerson at another meeting of the Club, saying of Holmes that he was "one born in a happy hour; who draws all men to him to read his books : whose thoughts leave us with such cheerful and perfumed memories that, when on a journey in any part of America, the tired traveler sees the newsboy entering the car, he exclaims at once with enthusiasm, 'There comes one bringing a book of Oliver Wendell Holmes, to give us an hour of relief and delight.'"

The friendship between these two great men was particularly interesting because they

were so different. Each found in the other qualities to admire the more because he himself lacked them. The genius of each was distinctive and contrasted strikingly with that of the other.

Holmes was not only one of the most brilliant of writers, but he was also one of the most captivating of talkers. His conversation bubbled over with bright sayings, wit, humor, and happily told stories. No social or convivial occasion was perfect without a humorous poem or address from him. He was admittedly the wittiest member of Boston's most brilliant literary circle. On the contrary Emerson was a comparatively silent man. He liked better to listen than to talk. Nobody was more welcome at social gatherings, but it was not as an entertainer. He could employ wit and humor; he often did; but it was not for itself, it was incidental to his serious thought. No words were listened to with more eagerness than his but it was for their wisdom, their insight, their inspiration, which was sure to sink deeply into the hearts of his listeners.

Emerson was a reformer,—reform was in his very blood. With his whole being he longed to help make a better world, to break chains, whether physical or mental, and set men free. Holmes had little reform fervor even where he sympathized with the end in view.

Emerson was fond of solitude, loved the country and nature. Holmes preferred the city, and all his talents required social contacts for their unfolding.

When the Transcendental movement was at its height and Emerson was a leader in it, Holmes, whose philosophy was always hard-headed and practical, looked on as an outsider and a mild critic.

Holmes was one of the most popular writers of his day. His *Atlantic Monthly* articles, which were almost at once reproduced in book form, were real events in the literary world; tens of thousands of men and women eagerly awaited their appearance. To Emerson recognition from the public came less suddenly. At the beginning of his career, the articles and poems which he published in *The Dial*, although they included some of the choicest work of his life, attracted little general attention. His first published volume, "Nature," which came to be recognized as one of the golden books of American literature, was twelve years in reaching a sale of five hundred copies.

After Emerson's death Oliver Wendell Holmes wrote a biography of him. The warm admiration Holmes felt for his great contemporary is evident in this work. Among the many lives of Emerson, this is interesting for its illuminating comments in Dr. Holmes' inimitable manner and for an insight and



appreciation that his friendship for the subject of his biography made possible.

A fine tribute to his friend is this summing up by Dr. Holmes of the permanent value of Emerson's works and life : " It seems to me that Emerson's best literary work in prose and verse must live as long as the language lasts; but whether it live or fade from memory, the influence of his great and noble life and of the spoken and written words which were its exponents, blends indestructibly with the enduring elements of civilization."

## **EMERSON AND JAMES RUSSELL LOWELL**

When Emerson delivered his Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard, James Russell Lowell, then a student in the University, listened to the address and was tremendously stirred by it. Years afterward he wrote, "To some of us that long past experience remains the most marvelous and fruitful we have ever had. Emerson awakened us, saved us from the body of this death. It was the sound 'of the trumpet that the young soul longs for.' . . . Nor did it blow retreat, but called us with assurance to victory." Lowell's admiration and devotion to Emerson, which were kindled by that address, lasted unimpaired to the end of Emerson's life.

There was much in common between the two men. The reformer in Emerson found a kindred spirit in Lowell. They were both champions of freedom and were unceasing in their opposition to every institution which enslaved men's minds or men's bodies. Both were ardent Americans, despising servile imitation of the Old World; they wanted America to develop her own civilization, to stand on her own feet and make her original contribution to the better life of the world.

Perhaps no writer of the Nineteenth Cen-

tury wrote more tellingly against war than Lowell in his "Bigelow Papers." But Emerson, too, writes powerfully against the continuance of "this first brutish form of the effort to be men." "War is on its last legs"; he exclaims, "and a universal peace is as sure as is the prevalence of civilization over barbarism, of liberal governments over feudal forms. The question for us is only, How soon?" "If peace is to be maintained," he says, "it must be by brave men who have come up to the same height as the hero, namely, the will to carry their life in their hand, and stake it at any instant for their principle but who have gone one step beyond the hero, and will not seek another man's life;—men who have, by their intellectual insight or else by their moral elevation, attained such a perception of their own intrinsic worth that they do not think property or their own body a sufficient good to be saved by such dereliction of principle as treating a man like a sheep."

Both Emerson and Lowell were deeply religious men, yet their religion was no narrow sectarianism or dogmatism but broad enough to include all sacred books, all prophets, all lovers of their fellow-men, all who worship the highest that they know.

The enthusiastic admiration which Lowell felt for the first address by Emerson that he heard, he continued to feel for all Emerson's written and spoken work. In his

Journal he writes thus of Emerson as a lecturer : " I have heard many great speakers and some accomplished orators, but never any that so moved and persuaded men as Emerson. There is a kind of undertone in that rich baritone of his that sweeps our minds from their foothold into deep waters with a drift we cannot and would not resist. And how artfully (for Emerson is a long-studied artist in those things) does the deliberate utterance, which seems waiting for the first word, seem to admit us as partners in the labor of thought, and make us feel as if the glance of humor were a sudden suggestion; as if the perfect phrase lying written there on the desk were as unexpected to him as to us."

Again Lowell has this to say : " A lecturer for something now like a third of a century, one of the pioneers of the lecturing system, the charm of his voice, his manner, and his matter, have never lost their power over his earlier hearers, and continually winds new ones in its enchanting meshes."

Attempting an appraisal of the quality of Emerson's genius, Lowell wrote as follows : "The artistic range of Emerson's mind is narrow; so is that of Aeschylus, so is that of Dante, so is that of Montaigne, so is that of Schiller, so is that of everyone but Shakespeare; but there is a gauge of height as well as that of breadth; of individuality as well as

of comprehensiveness; and, above all, there is a standard of genetic power, the test of the masculine as distinguished from the receptive nature."

In Lowell's "Fable for Critics" where he playfully summons, one by one, the literary celebrities of the day before him for judgment, he thus describes the Sage of Concord :

"There first comes Emerson, whose rich words, every one,  
Are like gold nails in a temple to hang trophies on;  
Whose prose is grand verse, while his verse, the Lord knows  
Is some of it pr— No ! 'tis not even prose.  
In the worst of his poems are mines of rich matter,  
But thrown in a heap with a crack and a clatter.  
A Greek head on right Yankee shoulders, whose range  
Has Olympus for one pole, for t'other the Exchange."

In Emerson's Journal for January, 1862, we find the following in praise of Lowell, after a reading of his "Bigelow Papers" : "We will not again disparage America now that we have seen what men it will bear. What a certificate of good elements in the soil, climate and institutions is Lowell, whose admirable verses I have just read."

Emerson and Lowell were among the select group from the Saturday Club who sponsored the starting of the *Atlantic Monthly*. Lowell became its first editor and Emerson contributed generously to its columns. Twenty-eight essays and poems from his pen were published there.

During Emerson's last visit to Europe he

spent three weeks with the Lowells, who were then living in Paris. Lowell, in a letter to his friend Charles Eliot Norton, dated March 18, 1873, writes of this as follows : " The Emersons are back with us, to our great satisfaction, and yesterday I took him to the top of the tower of Notre Dame, and played the part of Satan very well, I hope, showing him 'all the kingdoms of the world.' A very pleasant walk we had of it. He grows sweeter, if possible, as he grows older." A month later he writes to Leslie Stephen in England : " I hope you have seen something of Emerson, who is as sweet and wholesome as an Indian-summer afternoon. We had nearly three weeks of him here, to my great satisfaction." A little later he writes again to Stephen : " I am sorry you did not see more of Emerson. He is good to love, and if his head is sometimes in the air, his heart never is."

Late in life Emerson announced a course of lectures, and sent two course tickets to Lowell. Lowell responded with the following letter : " To R. W. Emerson. My dear Sir,—If you had known what a poem your two tickets contained for me, how much they recalled, how many vanished faces of thirty years ago, how much gratitude for all you have been and are to us younger men (a debt I always love to acknowledge, though I can never repay it), you would not have dreamed of my not being an eager hearer during the whole course.

Even were I not sure (as I always am with you) of having what is best in me heightened and strengthened, I should go, out of loyalty to what has been one of the great privileges of my life. I for one, 'Obey the voice at eve obeyed at prime, and you may be sure of one pair of ears in which the voice is always musical and magisterial too . . . I am gratefully and affectionately, Your liegeman, J. R. Lowell."

A few months after Emerson's death in 1882, when his correspondence with Carlyle was published, Lowell, who was in London at the time, read them and wrote to Charles Eliot Norton as follows : " I write you a line to send you my love, and to thank you for the ' Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence,' which I have read with pathetic interest. You can well imagine how many fading frescoes it brightened in the chambers of my memory. It pleased, but not surprised me to note in what an ampler ether and diviner air the mind and thought of Emerson dwelt than those that were habitual in Carlyle."

The quality of reverence that always pervaded Lowell's friendship for Emerson is indicated in this tribute he paid to his memory : " There was a majesty about him beyond all other men I have known, and he habitually dwelt in that ampler and diviner air to which most of us, if ever, rise only in spurts."

## EMERSON AND HENRY W. LONGFELLOW

In the entry of May 28, 1858, of Emerson's Journal we find the following : " We kept Agassiz's fiftieth birthday at the (Saturday) Club. The flower of the feat was the reading of three poems, written by our three poets, for the occasion. The first by Longfellow, who presided; the second by Holmes; the third by Lowell; all excellent in their way."

As fellow members of the Saturday Club, Longfellow and Emerson met often and knew each other well. Yet there was a certain formality about Longfellow's way of life which to Emerson was somewhat of a barrier against an easy intimacy in their friendship. In one of the entries in his Journal, Emerson wrote : " If Socrates were here, we could go and talk with him; but Longfellow we cannot go and talk with; there is a palace, and servants, . . . and wine glasses, and fine coats."

Emerson mentions Longfellow seldom in his Journal, but in Longfellow's Diaries and in his letters, there are many references to Emerson. From these we get glimpses of the relations between the two men.

On March 8, 1838, Longfellow writes in his Diary : " This evening I listened to a lecture by Emerson. It was a good lecture.



He mistakes his power somewhat, and at times speaks in oracles, darkly. He is vastly more of a poet than a philosopher. He has a brilliant mind, and develops and expands an idea very beautifully, and with abundant similitudes and illustrations. Jeremiah Mason said a sharp thing the other day, when asked whether he could understand Mr. Emerson. His answer was, 'No, I can't, but my *daughter can.*'"

On October 22, 1838, Longfellow writes to a friend: "In this quarter of the world lecturing is in fashion. Mr. Combe, the Scotch phrenologist, is lecturing in Boston; his lectures are well attended. Mr. Buckingham, the English traveller, is lecturing in Egypt; he gets three hundred dollars for each lecture. Also we have Mr. Emerson, a clergyman of New Views of Life, Death and Immortality, author of 'Nature' and friend of Carlyle. His is one of the finest lectures I ever heard, with magnificent passages of true prose-poetry. But it is all dreamy."

On January 1, 1848, Longfellow records in his Diary: "Emerson took tea with us to-day; rather shy in his manner, but pleasant and agreeable. We all drove down to hear him lecture, Lowell and T. being of the party. The lecture was on Napoleon. Very good and well spoken, and to the evident delight of the audience. We like Emerson,—

his beautiful voice, deep thought, and mild melody of language."

On December 5 of the same year Longfellow makes this further record in his Diary : "As I sat in the twilight this evening Emerson came in. He came to take tea, having a lecture at the Lyceum. After tea walked down with him. His lecture was good, but not of his richest and rarest. His subject, 'Eloquence.' By turns he was grave and jocose; and had some striking views and passages. He lets in a thousand new lights—sidelights and crosslights—into every subject."

In the Diary of January 26, 1849, Longfellow writes : "Another of Emerson's wonderful lectures. His subject 'Inspiration'; the lecture itself an illustration of the theme. Emerson is like a beautiful portico in a lovely scene of Nature. We stand expectant waiting for the High Priest to come forth; and lo, there comes a gentle wind from the portal, swelling and subsiding; and the blossoms and the vine-leaves shake, and far away down the green fields the grasses bend and wave; and we ask, 'When will the High Priest come forth and reveal to us the truth?' and the disciples say, 'He has already gone forth, and is yonder in the meadows.' 'And the truth he was to reveal?' 'It is Nature; nothing more.'"

On April 14, 1851, Longfellow wrote :

"Went to hear Emerson on the Fugitive Slave Law at the Cambridge City Hall. . . . The first part of the address was grand; so was the close. The treatment of Webster I did not like so well."

It is apparent from these excerpts how different were the two men, and yet that, in spite of their differences and their consequent critical opinions of each other, each admired the other and enjoyed his genius. Longfellow once spoke of Emerson as "the Chrysostom (golden-mouthed one) of our modern day."

Longfellow died a short time before Emerson. There is a touching story told of Emerson at the funeral of his friend. It was one of the last times that he left his own home, for he had become feeble and his memory failed him frequently. He could not be dissuaded from attending Longfellow's funeral. He stood beside the coffin and looked intently on the familiar features. Twice he did this, then, turning to one standing near, he said quietly but with much feeling, "That was a lovely man. I can't recall his name, but he was a beautiful soul."

## EMERSON AND AGASSIZ

Cabot, in his Memoir of Emerson, tells us that the friendship between Emerson and Agassiz "began at the Saturday Club and was never interrupted. It was an unfailing source of refreshment to Emerson at their monthly meetings. The abundant nature of Agassiz, his overflowing spirits, his equal readiness for any company and any subject, and a simplicity of manner which was the outcome of quick and wide sympathies, gave Emerson a sense of social enjoyment such as he rarely found elsewhere."

Emerson tells us that Agassiz was very fond of the Saturday Club, and that he was very popular there; that, alike in his conversation and his after-dinner addresses, he was always bright, entertaining and informing, and through all ran a subtle stream of humor like a gently rippling brook. One of Agassiz's short, humorous speeches he records, in the speaker's own words. "Many years ago," said the great naturalist,—the great authority on fishes, "when I was a young man, I was introduced to a very estimable lady in Paris, who in the conversation said to me that she wondered how a man of sense could spend his days dissecting a fish. I replied, 'Madam, if I could live by a brook which had plenty of

gudgeons, I should ask nothing better than to spend all my life there. But, since I have been in this country, I have become acquainted with a Club, in which I meet men of various talents, one man of profound scholarship in the languages; one of elegant literature, or a high mystic poet; or one man of large experience in the conduct of affairs; or one who teaches the blind to see; and I confess that I have enlarged my views of life; and I think that, besides a brook full of gudgeons, I should like to meet once a month such a society of friends."

In Emerson's Journal of May 28, 1857, we find the record of the celebration by the Saturday Club of Agassiz's fiftieth birthday. All the members were present, and three visitors,—a group of men than which no more distinguished could have been gathered in the State of Massachusetts. It was on this occasion that Longfellow read his poem, composed for this event, entitled "The Fiftieth Birthday of Agassiz." It begins as follows :

"It was fifty years ago  
In the beautiful month of May,  
In the beautiful Pays de Vaud,  
A child in its cradle lay.

And Nature, the old nurse, took  
The child upon her knee,  
Saying : 'Here is a story-book  
The Father has written for thee.'

'Come, wander with me,' she said,  
'Into regions yet untrod;  
And read what is still unread  
In the manuscripts of God.'

And he wandered away and away  
With Nature, the dear old nurse,  
Who sang to him night and day  
The rhyme of the universe.

And whenever the way seemed long, .  
Or his heart began to fail,  
She would sing a more wonderful song,  
Or tell a more wonderful tale."

In 1852, before Emerson had come to know Agassiz, he wrote in his Journal: "I saw in the cars a broad-featured, unctuous man, fat and plenteous as some successful politician, and pretty soon divined it must be the foreign Professor, who has had so marked a success in all our scientific and social circles, having established unquestionable leadership in them all;—and it was Agassiz."

Later when he no longer knew Agassiz merely by reputation, he writes, "Agassiz is really a man of great ability, breadth and resources, a rare and rich nature, and always maintains himself,—in all companies and on all occasions."

In the summer of 1866 Emerson and his wife and daughter visited Agassiz at his summer home in Nahant; after which he records in his Journal: "Visited Agassiz

by invitation, and spent the day at his house and on the Nahant rocks. He is a man to be thankful for, always cordial, full of facts, with unsleeping observation, perfectly communicative."

In another journal entry we read : Agassiz never appeared to such advantage as in his Biographical Discourse on Humboldt, at the Music Hall, in Boston, yesterday. What is unusual for him, he read a written discourse, about two hours long; yet all of it strong, nothing to spare, not a weak point, no rhetoric, no falsetto;—his personal recollections and anecdotes of their intercourse, simple, frank and tender in the tone of voice, too, no error of egotism or of self-assertion, and far enough from French sentimentalism. He is quite as good a man as his hero."

Emerson tells us that at one time Agassiz was offered an engagement for a series of popular lectures at a very profitable fee. He refused the offer with the remark, "I am not willing to waste my time making money."

Though Emerson's approach to nature was that of the poet and philosopher rather than the scientist, yet he sympathized with and shared the scientist's uncompromising search for truth and his patient interest in nature's infinite details. But the naturalist "who sees the flower and the bud with a poet's curiosity and awe" met Emerson's ideal most nearly. Hence his friendship for

Thoreau and for John Burroughs; and in Agassiz, too, he found this poetic appreciation of nature. Bliss Perry quotes Agassiz as saying that he "preferred to talk with Emerson on scientific subjects than with any other man he knew." "He has a scientific method of the severest kind," said Agassiz of Emerson, "and cannot be carried away by any theories." It is interesting to put besides these judgments that of Professor Tyndall, who said, "By Emerson, scientific conceptions are continually transmuted into the finer forms and warmer lines of an ideal world."

When Emerson sent his second son to Harvard he said to him: "Take all the electives you can that will bring you under the influence of Agassiz." That is probably the highest compliment he could have paid his scientific friend.



## EMERSON AND JAMES ELLIOT CABOT

Emerson's son tells us that "a principal attraction to Mr. Emerson in going to the Saturday Club" was the expectation of a talk with his friend, James Elliot Cabot. Of the relations between them he writes: "One friend, early known, but then seldom met—Mr. James Elliot Cabot—my father became acquainted with soon after the latter left college and entered on the study of architecture, and was attracted and interested by his character. Mr. Cabot contributed some papers to the 'Dial,' but my father rarely saw him until after the formation of the Saturday Club, where they met at the monthly dinners. . . For years he regretted that their paths so seldom came together, not knowing that this friend was kept in reserve to lift the load from his shoulders in his hour of need."\*

The "hour of need" came when Emerson returned from his last trip to Europe and endeavored to correct and revise proofs of a book that had been written sometime earlier and for which the publishers were clamoring. The burning of the Emerson house the previous summer with the excitement and

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\* "Emerson in Concord," Edward Waldo Emerson.

exposure incident to it had brought on an illness which interrupted Mr. Emerson's literary activities and obliged deferring the final work on this book. After his winter abroad he settled down to completing the correction and revision of the proofs. However, his strength proved unequal to the task and his family resolved that he must have help. In the emergency they appealed to James Elliot Cabot, whose literary judgment and ability Emerson greatly esteemed. Mr. Cabot assumed the task, and the final revision of "Letters and Social Aims" was made with his assistance.

Emerson seems to have felt at this period that his failing strength was a warning of his approaching end. As his literary executor, the person he preferred above all others was his able friend Cabot, but he hesitated to ask so great a favor. Eventually his family, feeling that the matter was weighing too heavily upon Emerson's mind, revealed to Mr. Cabot his wish and obtained a willing and generous consent.

Mr. Cabot's task of editing Emerson's writings was a difficult one. During the remaining years of Emerson's life there developed a gradual loss of memory and of mental grasp which made it impossible for him to render the assistance to Mr. Cabot which under normal conditions he would have given. A further difficulty was due to the

mixing up of the manuscripts in Emerson's study as result of the burning of the house in the summer of 1872. Still another cause of confusion was Emerson's habit of adding to one lecture, on certain occasions, passages from another, so that it was difficult for the editor to know which lecture should contain these passages.

Apart from the satisfaction that Emerson felt in being able to entrust the editing of his works to one in whose literary judgment he felt such confidence, it afforded him personal pleasure to have the opportunity of seeing so much of Mr. Cabot and thus cementing their friendship.

On the last day of Emerson's final sickness he took leave of several of his dearest friends who came to see him,—among them James Elliot Cabot. Edward Emerson relates, "When it was told him that Mr. Cabot had come, his face lighted up and he exclaimed, 'Elliot Cabot? Praise!'" "My father," says Edward Emerson, "felt toward Mr. Cabot as toward a younger brother."

"Letters and Social Aims," which Mr. Cabot undertook to edit in 1873, with Emerson's help, was followed by his editing eleven other volumes. These, together, constituted the Riverside Edition, published in 1883, the year after Emerson's death, as his complete works, though, as an actual fact, it did not contain all. For twenty years this was the

standard edition of Emerson's writings. In 1903 appeared the Centenary Edition, edited by Dr. Edward Waldo Emerson, and in 1909, a very important addition to Emerson's writings appeared, the Journals of Emerson in ten volumes, edited by Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes.

James Elliot Cabot rendered another great service to his distinguished friend. At the earnest desire of the family and in accordance with Emerson's own wish, Mr. Cabot consented to be his biographer, and in 1888, four years before his own death, he completed his life of Emerson, which was published in two volumes under the title "A Memoir of Ralph Waldo Emerson."\*

\* All the works named in this chapter were published by Houghton Mifflin & Co., Boston.

## EMERSON AND CHARLES ELIOT NORTON

Emerson was thirty years old when Charles Eliot Norton, after a year and a half of study in Germany, returned to America filled with enthusiasm for European scholarship, history and art. Norton was twenty-one. He found the literary circles of Boston discussing Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa oration, his Divinity School address, his lectures on Culture; and the young enthusiast for foreign art and literature at once recognized in Emerson a fine American incarnation of the idealism, the intellectuality, the literary excellence and beauty that had attracted him in the works of writers abroad, combined with a moral and spiritual fervor that thrilled him. He made Emerson's acquaintance, and thus began a friendship that lasted throughout their lives.

It is an interesting commentary on Emerson's high esteem of this friend that when he wrote his essay on Friendship he at once sent it to Norton for his judgment and criticism. Few men have had a greater genius for friendship than Charles Eliot Norton. He was on intimate terms with many of the leading literary men on both sides of the Atlantic.

In the correspondence which he and

Emerson carried on through many years the perfect understanding between the two is evident. After Emerson's death Norton published a small volume of these letters under the title, "Emerson's Letters to a Friend," and in it we get glimpses of the philosopher in his daily life, digging in his garden, grafting his fruit trees, playing with his children, reading a new book, talking with eminent visitors, laughing at a troublesome crank, writing, spending an interesting day in Boston, traveling, or lecturing and commenting on his audiences and the people he meets on his tours. In his Introduction to this volume Mr. Norton writes: "Emerson, in his letters to his friends, shows himself in a clearer mirror even than in his poems and essays. They are at times his most intimate expressions, the most vivid illustrations of his essential individuality, and individuality so complete and absolute as to distinguish him from all other men in his generation, and to give him a place with the few of all time who have had native force sufficient to enable them to be truly themselves and to show to their brother men the virtue of an independent spirit."

Charles Eliot Norton had a long career as educator, scholar and man of letters. He was professor of the history of art at Harvard University for a quarter of a century; he was a noted Dante scholar, the author of transla-

tions of the *Vita Nuova* and the *Divine Comedy*; and he edited and published the letters and memorials of several of his famous contemporaries, among the best known of which was "Letters of Carlyle and Emerson."

Norton was a frequent visitor to Europe and for different periods resided in England or on the continent. When Emerson made his last trip to Europe in 1873, accompanied by his daughter Ellen, Mr. Norton and his family were living in London and the Emersons stayed with them while there. Norton, from his long acquaintance with European countries and literary people, was able to be of great assistance to Emerson and his daughter in helping them plan their journeys in England and on the continent. When the trip was completed and the Emersons came home the Norton family accompanied them on the voyage back to America.

The great admiration which Norton had for Emerson did not prevent him from making critical appraisal of his writings. In commenting on Emerson's poetry he said: "His poems are for the most part more fitted to invigorate the moral sense than to delight the artistic. At times, indeed, he is singularly felicitous in expression; and some of his verses both charm and elevate the soul. These rare verses will live in the memories of men. No poet is surer of immortality than Mr. Emerson; but the greater part of his

poetry will be read, not so much for its artistic as for its moral worth."

How deep and tender was the friendship between these two men may be judged from this sentence in one of Emerson's letters to Norton : " In my lonely walks in the woods I see you and talk with you so often that it seems to me that through some of the fine channels which inform fine souls you must sometimes feel the influence."

Charles Eliot Norton's fame has dimmed in the years since his death, but he made an important contribution to American scholarship in his time, and through his friendships he was able to give to the world letters from some of his great contemporaries for which posterity will remember him with gratitude.



## EMERSON AND JOHN BURROUGHS

From the letters of John Burroughs and from the testimony of those who knew him early in his career it is clear that Emerson had a very great influence both in directing his thought and in forming his style. Emerson was the older man by thirty-four years and had arrived at the height of his fame and distinction as an author and lecturer by the time Burroughs started on his career. The naturalist's biographer, Clara Barrus, tells us that it was Emerson who opened his eyes to the spiritual side of nature, who taught him to look through its material forms to its deep heart and find its poetry and inspiration.

So completely did the young Burroughs make Emerson his model that one of his early essays, published anonymously in the *Atlantic Monthly*, was believed for some time to be from the pen of the Concord seer.

In later life Burroughs told this story of his first meeting with Emerson, which took place after he had already made the distinguished author his hero through reading and re-reading his writings: "I remember the first time I saw Emerson," said Burroughs, "it was at West Point during the June examinations of the cadets. Emerson

had been appointed by President Lincoln as one of the board of visitors. I had been around there in the afternoon, and had been peculiarly interested in a man whose striking face and manner challenged my attention. I did not hear him speak, but watched him going about with a silk hat, much too large, pushed back on his head; his sharp eyes peering into everything, curious about everything. 'Here' said I to myself, 'is a countryman who has got away from home and intends to see all that is going'—such an alert, interested air! That evening a friend came to me and in a voice full of awe and enthusiasm said, 'Emerson is in town!' Then I knew who the alert, sharp-eyed stranger was. We went to the meeting and met our hero, and the next day walked and talked with him. He seemed glad to get away from those old fogies and talk with us young men. I carried his valise to the boat-landing—I was in the seventh heaven of delight."

Of Burroughs' second meeting with Emerson he writes in a letter to a friend: "I had hardly got settled back into the old routine here when along comes Emerson and unsettles me for a week, my planet showing great perturbation in its orbit whenever such a body comes in my neighborhood. He was advertised to lecture in Baltimore, and away I go, dragging Walt with me, to hear him, and as fate would have it, he enters the vestibule

of the hall just as we do, and we have a little talk in one of the reception rooms. . . . He received me quite warmly, unusually so, Walt said, and, to my consternation, proceeded to put me at once on trial for a remark I had made about an observation of Thoreau's (in my essay, 'With the Birds'). I defended myself as well as I could. . . He was good-natured about it. Said he had my 'Wake-Robin' on his table, and had looked into it with a good deal of interest. Thought the title an excellent one—expected to see an older man in me, etc." The letter goes on to tell of his seeing Emerson again shortly after this, waylaying him at the station as he was about to take the train. Burroughs was not satisfied that Emerson appreciated Walt Whitman, to whom he was himself devoted, and he evidently wanted to talk with Emerson about this.

"He was alone," writes Burroughs, "and had ten or fifteen minutes to spare, so I got him aboard the train and sat down beside him. He has not changed much since we saw him, except perhaps his nose is a little more hooked, and his hair a little thinner. I drew him out on the Walt and found out what was the matter. He thought Walt's friends ought to quarrel a little more with him, and insist on his being a little more tame and orderly—more mindful of the requirements of beauty, of art, of culture, etc.,—all of which was very

pitiful to me, and I wanted to tell him so. But the train started just then and I got off. However I wrote him a letter telling what I thought and sent him my book."

This temporary dissatisfaction with Emerson is evident in various of Burroughs' letters of this period. He writes of Emerson's coming again to lecture and adds, in his letter. "He came and went the same night and I did not seek him this time." Many years later, Clara Barrus tells us, he read over with her his letters of this period and was rather apologetic for his irritation at Emerson. "It was during the reconstruction period after the War," he explained. "Emerson's lectures were full of idealism, but they seemed unsuited to our needs. In a book they would have been like a star, but on a lecture platform they were all right, in a way—Emerson couldn't unhitch his wagon from a star to drag our little burdens to market."

After Burroughs had established his home on the Hudson and built in the woods his solitary retreat where he carried on his studies and his observations of nature, the occasional friends who were permitted to visit him there have reported that prominent among the books constantly by him were Emerson's works and Thoreau's and Whitman's. Clara Barrus gives us the report of one such visitor whom Mr. Burroughs had

invited to come and see him at "Slabsides," as he called his woodland shack. "Arriving at the railway station, I found him waiting for me, and his quiet but hearty welcome made me feel as if I had always known him. His kindly face was framed with snowy hair. He was dressed in olive brown clothes, his 'old experienced coat' blended in color with the tree trunks and the soil with which one felt sure it had often been in close communion. Starting at once for Slabsides, we climbed a steep wooded path for a mile or so, when suddenly we emerged upon what had once been a small rock-girt swamp up among those hills, but which Mr. Burroughs had drained and transformed into a fine celery garden. Here nestling under grave rocks, embowered in forest trees, is the vine-covered cabin. Blending with its surroundings, Slabsides is coarse, strong and substantial without; within it is snug and comfortable." Mr. Burroughs built a glowing wood-fire and the two sat down for a talk. He talked about nature and about books, and about the men and women whose lives had closely touched his own. Especially he talked about Emerson and Whitman, the two men to whom he felt he owed most and whom he admired most.

In Burroughs' letters and in his writings about Emerson he emphasizes the point that Emerson is an inspirer of youth, that he was the guiding genius of his own young man-

hood, and he believes, will always attract and stimulate young men and women. "He is the prophet and philosopher of young men," Burroughs writes. "The old man and the man of the world think little of him, but of the youth who is ripe for him he takes almost an unfair advantage." He ends his chapter on Emerson in "Birds and Poets" by saying : "Aside from and over and above everything else, Emerson appeals to youth and to genius. If you have these, you will understand him and delight in him; if not, or neither of them, you will make little of him. I do not see why this should not be just as true any time hence as at present."

The last time that Burroughs saw Emerson was at the seventieth birthday breakfast of Oliver Wendell Holmes, in Boston : "But then," said Burroughs sadly, "his mind was like a splendid bridge with one span missing; he had—what is it you doctors call it?—aphasia,—he had to grope for his words. But what a serene, god-like air ! He was like a plucked eagle tarrying in the midst of a group of lesser birds."

A few months before Emerson's death Walt Whitman went to Concord to see him, and he found the visit so delightful that he could not leave for home without writing to Burroughs to tell him about it. "Concord, September 19, 1881. Dear John : I have had a curiously full and satisfactory time with

Emerson—he came to see me Saturday evening early, Mrs. E. also, and stayed two hours—Yesterday I went there (by pressing invitation) to dinner, and stayed two hours—a wonderfully good two hours—the whole family were very cordial, including Mrs. E. and the son, Edward, a doctor, a fine, handsome, 'cute, glowing young man, with a beautiful wife and child. I took to them all. I cannot tell you how sweet and good (and all as it should be) Emerson look'd and behaved—he did not talk in the way or join in any animated conversation, but pleasantly and hesitatingly, and sparsely—fully enough—To me it seemed just as it should be. . . Walt Whitman."

Shortly after this letter, he wrote again from Boston : " I am now back here finishing up, only stayed a few days in Concord but they were marked days. . . . For my part, I thought the old man in his smiling and alert quietude and withdrawnness . . . more eloquent, grand, appropriate and impressive than ever, more indeed than could be described. Isn't it comforting that I have had, in the sunset, as it were, so many significant, affectionate hours with him, under such quiet, beautiful, appropriate circumstances ? "

The next year Emerson died. A letter from Burroughs to Whitman dated May 1, 1882, contains the following : " What a blank there is in New England ! To me Emerson filled nearly the whole horizon in that direc-

tion. But I suppose it is better so, though the very sunlight seems darkened.

"If our passage were not paid to England, I should not go. . . . I have no heart for the trip from the first, and now the death of Emerson (how those few words penetrate me !) and your troubles, make me want to stay at home more than ever."

The chapter on Emerson in Burroughs' volume, "Birds and Poets" gives the naturalist's mature summing up of his estimate of the great Concord philosopher and poet. Here Burroughs' ardent worship of Emerson during youth, his irritation over differing views on certain poems of Whitman and over Emerson's aloofness from the political emotions of the day,—both these phases of Burroughs' feeling for Emerson are fused with a later and calmer judgment concerning the greatness and uniqueness of his character and his writings. "There have been broader and more catholic natures," he writes, "but few so towering and audacious in expression and so rich in characteristic traits. Every scrap and shred of him is important and related." Again in the same essay he says : "I know of no other writing that yields the reader so many strongly stamped medalion-like sayings and distinctions. . . . It is the old gold or silver or copper, but how bright it looks in his pages ! Emerson loves facts, things, objects, as the workman his tools.



He makes everything serve. . . . He bends the most obstinate element to his purpose; as the bird, under her keen necessity, weaves the most contrary and diverse materials into her nest. . . . He has a wonderful hardiness and push. Where else in literature is there a mind, moving in so rare a medium, that gives one such a sense of tangible resistance and force ? ”

Burroughs' debt to Emerson he acknowledges in the following passage : “ No man of Emerson's type and quality has ever before, so far as I know, appeared on the earth. He looked like a god; that wise, serene, pure, inscrutable look was without parallel in any human face I ever saw. . . . The subtle, half-defined smile of his face was the reflection of his soul. Emerson was my spiritual father.”

## EMERSON AND WALT WHITMAN

Whitman was sixteen years younger than Emerson. He spent his youth in Long Island and his later life in Camden, New Jersey; thus he did not belong to any of the groups, literary, social, religious, of which Emerson was a central figure. It was not strange, therefore, that the two men did not become personally acquainted until rather late in life. However, Whitman had long known Emerson through his writings. Early in his young manhood he had come upon some of Emerson's works, and had read them with the greatest delight. They were fresh water to his thirsty soul. Emerson's "Man Thinking" thrilled him. He at once lifted up its author to the highest place among American poets. Emerson became his "Mystic Trumpeter." He wrote of him: "A just man, poised on himself, his thought all living, all enduring, and sane, and clear as the sun."

One of the marked characteristics of Emerson all his life, was his quickness to discover and his eagerness to welcome any sign of literary genius, appearing in any quarter. It was most natural, therefore, that when Whitman made his first venture in poetry by publishing his *Leaves of Grass*, he should send it at once to Emerson, and that Emerson

should be one of the first to recognize and acclaim its unique quality, even in its earliest edition of only ninety-four pages. After receiving the little book, Emerson wrote to Whitman the following remarkable letter : "Concord, Mass., 21 July, 1855, Dear Sir, I am not blind to the worth of the wonderful gift of *Leaves of Grass*. I find it the most extraordinary piece of wit and wisdom that America has yet contributed. I am very happy in reading it, as great power makes me happy . . . I give you joy of your free and brave thought. I have great joy in it. I find incomparable things said incomparably well, as they must be. I find the courage of treatment which so delights me, and which large perception only can inspire. I greet you at the beginning of a great career . . . I rubbed my eyes a little to see if this sunbeam were no illusion; but the solid sense of the book is a sober certainty. It has the best merits, namely, of fortifying and encouraging. I wish to see my benefactor, and have felt much like striking my tasks and visiting New York to pay you my respects. Ralph Waldo Emerson."

The edition of *Leaves of Grass* which Emerson received and of which he wrote, did not contain "Children of Adam," the poem which has been most criticized. If it had, there seems reason to believe that his praise of the book would have been more restrained.

This poem, which appeared in later editions, distinctly displeased Emerson; and the statement is made by one of his biographers (Mr. Van Wyck Brooks), that "for three hours, one clear February day, Emerson walked up and down with Walt under the elms of the Boston Common, begging him to suppress it—to give the book a chance to be read." Whitman believed not only that all parts of the human body are equally honorable and equally sacred, but that an author to be honest should write about all with perfect freedom. The argument of Emerson and others, that there are privacies in human lives which should be allowed to remain privacies, and that no right view of honesty demands that all intimacies should be blazoned to the world,—this argument did not seem to weigh with Whitman, and the poem in question was retained.

Emerson did not quite like the long catalogues of things which were a part of some of Whitman's poems. He once spoke of these as "a singular blending of the Hindu Bhagavad Gita and the New York Herald." One day while reading the writings of an ancient Welsh bard, he finds and copies in the *Journal* the following curious lines :

"I am water, I am a wren;  
I am a workman, I am a star;  
I am a serpent;  
I am a cell, I am a chink,

I am a depository of song,  
I am a learned person."

At the end Emerson adds this comment :  
" I suspect that Walt Whitman had been reading these Welsh lines when he wrote his *Leaves of Grass*."

Though Emerson was thus critical of certain features of Whitman's method, he remained a staunch admirer of his genius and a firm friend. Whitman himself, after Emerson's death, thus summed up his relations with the Concord poet, for a friend to incorporate in an article. " Emerson had more of a personal friendship for Walt Whitman than has been generally known; making a determined visit to Brooklyn in 1857, soon after the appearance of *Leaves of Grass*, . . . walking out to the little cottage in the suburbs, several miles from the ferry, where Walt Whitman lived. From that time regularly for years afterwards whenever he came to New York he appointed a meeting, and they two generally dined together and spent some hours. When Mr. Whitman was in Boston in 1860 Emerson was his frequent and cordial visitor. As time elapsed, though officious persons intervened, and there was a lull of some years, I doubt if it could be said that Mr. Ralph Waldo Emerson's love and affection (and few knew how deeply he could love) ever went out more warmly to anyone

and remained more fixed under the circumstances than toward Walt Whitman.”\*

A few months before Emerson's death Whitman visited him, and afterward wrote in his diary an account of the visit. This gives a vivid picture of the serenity and beauty of Emerson's last days and reveals Whitman's sensitiveness to human values and his reverence for his Concord friend. "Camden, December 1, 1881. During my last three or four months' jaunt to Boston and through New England, I have spent wonderful days in Concord and with Emerson, seeing him under the most happy circumstances, in the calm, peaceful, but most radiant twilight of his old age, now in his eightieth year, in his home, sunny, surrounded by his beautiful family. . . . Never had I a better piece of luck befall me—a long and blessed evening with Emerson, in a way I couldn't have wished better. For two hours he sat placidly where I could see his face in the best light near me. The back parlor was well filled with people, neighbors, many fresh and charming faces, women, mostly young, but some old. My friends, Bronson Alcott and his daughter Louisa, were there early. There was a good deal of talk, the main subject being Henry Thoreau—with some

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\* See footnote to p. 216 of *Whitman and Burroughs* by Clara Barrus.

letters to and from him—one of them by Margaret Fuller, others by Horace Greeley, W. H. Channing, etc.,—one from Thoreau himself, most quaint and interesting. My seat was such that, without being rude or anything of the kind, I could just look squarely at Emerson, which I did a good part of the two hours. On entering he had spoken very briefly, easily and politely to several of the company, then settled himself in his chair, a little pushed back, and, though a listener and apparently an alert one, remained silent through the whole talk and discussion. And so, there Emerson sat, and I looking at him ! A good color in his face, eyes clear, with the well-known expression of sweetness." *Next Day.* "Several hours at Emerson's home, and dinner there ! An old familiar house (he has been in it thirty-five years), with the surrounding furnishment, roominess, plain elegance and fullness, signifying democratic ease, sufficient opulence and an admirable old-fashioned simplicity;—modern luxury, with its sumptuousness and affectation, either looked lightly upon or ignored altogether. Of course the best of the present occasion was the sight of Emerson himself; as just said, a healthy color in his cheeks, and good light in his eyes, a cheery expression and just the amount of talking that best suited, namely, a word or short phrase only where needed, and almost always with a smile. Besides Emer-

son himself, Mrs. Emerson and their daughter Ellen, the son Edward and his wife, and others, relatives and intimates. Mrs. Emerson resumed the subject of the evening before (I sat next to her), gave me further and fuller information about Thoreau, who years ago, during Mr. Emerson's absence in Europe (in 1848), had lived for some time in the family by invitation." Whitman concludes his account of his visit with an interesting thought about his distinguished friend, which is well worth repeating: "After all is said, one thing impresses me most of all about Emerson. Amid the utter delirium-disease called book-making, its feverish cohorts filling our world with every form of morbidity, how comforting it is to know of an author who has, through a long life, written as honestly, spontaneously and innocently as the sun shines or the wheat grows—the truest, sanest, most moral, sweetest literary man on record—unsoiled by pecuniary or any other warp !



## EMERSON AND THE ANTI-SLAVERY MOVEMENT

It is impossible to get a correct understanding of Emerson's relation to the great anti-slavery struggle going on in his time, and to its leaders (William Lloyd Garrison, Wendell Phillips, Theodore Parker, Samuel May, Lovejoy, John Brown and the rest) without first obtaining a clear view of his attitude toward all reforms and all reformers.

He was not the kind of reformer that Garrison and Phillips were, and for this reason was often criticized by the more ardent and radical abolitionists.

Dr. Charles W. Eliot, in his small book, "Four American Leaders," gives what seems to be a just, as well as outspoken, description of Emerson's way of looking at reforms and reformers. Says Dr. Eliot : " Accurately speaking, Emerson was a prophet and inspirer of reforms rather than himself a practical reformer. For this reason he was often a disappointment to others. His visions of reform were far-reaching, his doctrines often radical, and his exhortations fervid ; but when it came to action, particularly to habitual action, he was surprisingly conservative. He manifested a good deal of sympathy with the community experiments

at Brook Farm; but he declined to take part in them himself. He was intimate with many of the leading abolitionists; but no one has described more vividly their intellectual and social defects. He laid down principles which, when applied, would inevitably lead to progress and reform; but he took little part in the imperfect step-by-step process of actual reforming."

Emerson particularly distrusted reforms which resorted to politics. His supreme dependence for promoting reforms of every kind was education. He declared that we shall learn one day to supersede politics by education; that political measures against slavery, war, gambling, intemperance, only medicate the symptoms; that we must start farther back,—namely, in education. He taught that, if we hope to reform mankind, we must not begin with adults, but with the children; we must begin in the schools.

If Emerson's activity as a practical reformer was small, his influence as a prophet and inspirer of reforms was large, and his sympathetic support of those who were actively leading the reform movements was important. He advocated their causes in his lectures. He freely and courageously attended their meetings, sitting on the platform and sometimes adding his supporting word. The fearlessness with which he championed an unpopular cause or a defeated leader when he

believed the cause worthwhile or the man sincere, is illustrated by an incident connected with his lecture, delivered in Boston in 1838, on "Heroism." He had moved his audience to enthusiasm by his eloquent praise of heroism and heroes in other lands and times. Then suddenly, looking straight into the eyes of his listeners, who were largely conservative and opposed to the anti-slavery movement, he declared with significant emphasis :

"The sun never shines on a day in which this element may not work. It was but yesterday that the brave Lovejoy gave his breast to the bullets of the mob for the rights of free speech and opinion, and died when it was better not to live." Says an eye-witness, "A cold shudder ran through the audience at the calm braving of public opinion." To celebrate heroism in ancient times and foreign lands was inspiring but to recognize a hero in the lynched abolitionist,—for this they were unprepared, surprised and shocked.

With the same force and courage, Emerson publicly praised the idealism and the heroism of John Brown when he had been sentenced and hung by the state of Virginia for his brave (though ill-advised) efforts in behalf of the slaves. Speaking in Tremont Temple, Boston, Emerson said :

"John Brown is a man to make friends wherever on earth courage and integrity are esteemed,—the rarest of heroes, a pure ideal-

ist, with no by-ends of his own. Many of us have seen him and every one who has heard him speak has been impressed alike by his simple, artless goodness, joined with his sublime courage. He believes in two articles—two instruments, shall I say?—the Golden Rule and the Declaration of Independence. He also believes in the Union of the States and he conceives that the only obstruction to the Union is slavery, and for that reason, as a patriot, he works for its abolition. His own speeches to the court have interested the nation in him. What magnanimity, and what innocent pleading, as of childhood! You remember his words: ‘If I had interfered in behalf of the rich, the powerful, the intelligent, the so-called great, or any of their friends, parents, wives, or children, it would all have been deemed right. But I believe that to have interfered, as I have done, for the despised poor, was not wrong, but right.’

“It is easy to see what a favorite John Brown will be with history, which plays such pranks with temporary reputations. Nothing can resist the sympathy which all elevated minds must feel with him throughout the whole civilized world. It is the *reductio ad absurdum* of Slavery, when the Governor of Virginia is forced to hang a man whom he declares to be the man of the most integrity, truthfulness and courage that he has ever met.

Is that the kind of man the gallows is built for ? ”

In another address on John Brown given at about the same period, in Salem, Mass., Emerson said, “ Who makes the Abolitionist ? It is the slaveholder. The arch-abolitionist, older than Brown, older than the Shenandoah Mountains, is Love, whose other name is Justice, which was before King Alfred, before Lycurgus, before Slavery, and will be after it.”

Emerson's eulogies on John Brown, to which the newspapers of the country gave wide publicity, greatly displeased the conservative public, especially in New England. This cost him much, financially, as his lecture engagements, for the time being, were almost entirely cut off. For two years after those speeches he gave no lectures in Boston.

The anti-slavery movement was not the only reform that Emerson championed. The times were rife with new causes whose purpose was the bettering of social conditions, and Emerson felt sympathy and interest for most of them. In his lecture on “ The Progress of Culture,” he speaks of the “ marked ethical quality ” of these “ innovations,” and he lists with warm approval the following : the new claim of woman to a political status and to the control of her own property; the abolition of slavery; the establishing of the Sanitary Commission and the Freedmen's

Bureau; the abolition of capital punishment and of imprisonment for debt; the improvement of prisons; the efforts for the suppression of intemperance; the search for just rules affecting labor; the co-operative societies; the free-trade league; improved almshouses; the incipient international Congresses.

William M. Salter, writes thus of Emerson : " He witnessed with joy and exhilaration the growth of the reform spirit in his day. He declared that all true religion tends in the direction of reform; that the leaders of our crusades against war, slavery, intemperance, government based on force, selfish trade usages, unjust property laws and the rest, are true successors of Luther, Knox, Robinson, Fox, Penn, Whitefield and Wesley. Emerson once exclaimed, ' What is a man born for but to be a reformer ? ' "

## EMERSON AND WILLIAM LLOYD GARRISON

While Emerson and Garrison were friends and co-workers for the abolition of slavery, their methods were very different; they did not always approve of each other's ways of working for the cause,—indeed, they did not always refrain from criticism of one another. But no one can doubt the sincerity of both. Garrison was the more conspicuous abolitionist, the more powerful orator with the masses, the more widely read writer (through his abolition paper, *The Liberator*), and far the more able and efficient organizer. At the same time Emerson's assistance to the anti-slavery cause was very valuable. He never hesitated to let it be known that he was an enemy of slavery. He often attended abolition meetings, sometimes speaking, and his attitude and his words carried much weight with the more thoughtful and influential element of an audience. His pen was always at the disposal of the friends of freedom. His high literary and social standing tended to give prestige to the anti-slavery movement and to open ears which otherwise would have been closed.

Emerson sometimes criticized Garrison, and probably not always justly. Neverthe-

lest he recognized his ability and courage and did not fail to give him also praise. We find in his Journals such records as the following:

"Garrison is a man of great ability in conversation; of a certain long-sightedness in debate, which is a great excellence; a tenacity of his proposition which no accidents or rambles can divert; a calmness and method in unfolding the details of his argument, and an eloquence of illustration, which contents the ear and the mind."

"The haters of Garrison have lived to rejoice in his grand movement (anti-slavery)."

"I can never speak of that gentleman without respect."

"Round him Legislatures revolve."

The relations between Emerson and Garrison were almost entirely connected with the anti-slavery cause. The personal tastes and habits of the two were not sufficiently alike to bring them together, on other grounds. Moreover, Garrison was so deeply engrossed in the abolition fight that he had little time for interests or pursuits aside from that. But in public meetings where both were taking part and in groups where anti-slavery was being discussed, the two came to know each other and respect each other's qualities. Certainly the cause of human freedom owes much to both.



## EMERSON AND CHARLES SUMNER

During many years of Emerson's life, Charles Sumner, a cultured and widely honored lawyer of Boston, represented Massachusetts in the United States Senate, where he won fame and influence, particularly as a powerful and uncompromising opponent of the extension of slavery into the territories and new states of the West. Emerson was his friend and admirer. He supported him as a candidate for election to the Senate and heartily approved of his able and courageous work in Congress.

Sumner was a great orator. This was shown long before he entered the United States Senate. Emerson wrote in his Journal of August 27, 1846, after Sumner's Phi Beta Kappa address at Harvard: "His oration was marked with a certain magnificence which I do not well know where to parallel." Edward Everett said, "It was an amazingly splendid affair. I never heard it surpassed: I don't know that I ever heard it equalled."

Sumner's earlier high reputation was maintained and increased by his utterances in the Senate, especially by his mighty speech on the Nebraska Bill, five hours in length, delivered May 19 and 20, 1856, in which he

portrayed and denounced the "Crime against Kansas" (the crime of introducing slavery into a free territory) with such an overwhelming torrent of massed facts, of irrefutable logic and of moral indignation as had not been known in the English-speaking world since Edmund Burke's Impeachment of Warren Hastings in London for his crime against India.

The speech was absolutely unanswerable. Unfortunately a Congressman from one of the Southern states, an impassioned supporter of the Nebraska Bill, feeling himself and his party powerless to combat the effect upon Congress and the country of so devastating an attack upon the bill, completely lost all self-control, all sense of propriety and of decent behavior, and violently assaulted Sumner, causing him serious physical injuries. This outrage was denounced all over the North and not a few of the fair-minded people of the South. In a protest meeting held in the Concord Town Hall, Emerson not only condemned the brutal act but paid the following tribute to Mr. Sumner :

"The outrage which has been committed in Washington is the more shocking from the singularly pure character of its victim. Mr. Sumner's position is exceptional in its honor. —When he was sent to the United States Senate we were told that we would find him a man of the world like the rest; it is quite

impossible to be at Washington and not bend; he will bend as the rest have done. Well, he did not bend. He took his position and kept it. He bore meekly the cold shoulder from some of his New England colleagues and the hatred of his enemies.—Cheered by the love and respect of good men with whom he acted, he has never faltered in his maintenance of justice and freedom. He has gone beyond the large expectations of his friends, in his increasing ability and his manlier tone.—I wish that he may know the shudder of terror that ran through all this community on the first tidings of the brutal attack. Let him hear that every man of worth in New England loves his virtues; that every mother thinks of him as the protector of freedom.”

For four years, following the brutal assault upon him, Sumner was an invalid and a terrible sufferer. But at last he recovered to such a degree as to be able to render his country some years more of important service. His last term in the Senate came after the Civil War. Having served longer than any other Senator, he held a place of high esteem and influence in the Congress. Moreover the cause of anti-slavery to which he had devoted himself so ardently and courageously had triumphed and he was no longer obliged to fight the policies of a powerful section of his fellow senators. Perhaps no American in public life at that time was so influential and

so honored as he. In one of the entries in his Journal, Emerson writes regarding Sumner : " Wherever I have met with a dear lover of the country and its moral interests, he is sure to be a supporter of Sumner. Sumner's moral instinct and character are so exceptionally pure that he must have perpetual magnetism for honest men; his ability and working energy such that every good friend of the Republic must vote for him."

In July 1870, we find Emerson writing in his Journal : " Sumner has been collecting his works. They will be the history of the Republic for the last twenty-five years, as told by a brave, perfectly honest, and well-instructed man with social culture and relation to all eminent persons."

In March 1874 Charles Sumner died. We have an indication of the deep regard that he had for Emerson in the fact that, as Judge Hoar sat beside his bed in Washington, shortly before he passed away, Sumner said to him, " Judge, tell Emerson how much I love and revere him." That Emerson returned this love and reverence is evident in these words in which he characterized this friend : " Clean, self-poised, great-hearted man, noble in person, incorruptible in life, friend of the poor, champion of the oppressed ! "

A memorial meeting was planned for Charles Sumner and Emerson was asked for a poetical tribute, for this occasion. He

chose these lines from his poem in memory of his own brother, Edward Bliss Emerson :

" All inborn power that could  
Consist with homage to the good  
Flamed from his martial eye,  
Fronting foes of God and man,  
Frowning down the evil doer,  
Battling for the weak and poor ! "

## EMERSON AND JULIA WARD HOWE

Emerson wrote of Mrs. Howe : " I honor the author of the Battle Hymn of the Republic. She was born in the city of New York. I could well wish she were a native of Massachusetts. We have had no such poetess in New England."

Emerson and Mrs. Howe were friends during nearly the whole of his public life. I cannot do better than let Mrs. Howe tell how the friendship began. In an article published in *The Critic* (New York) in 1903, she records the following reminiscences :

" I made Mr. Emerson's acquaintance at the beginning of a journey from Boston to New York, in days in which the " Sound " Boat formed a necessary part of the route.' . . At an early state of our progress we were detained for some time in a rather comfortless station, and here I presently saw Mr. Emerson carrying on his shoulder a three-year-old child, whose mother, I afterwards learned, had taken a deck-passage on board the steamer to New York. I had thought of the " Great Transcendental " as of one very remote from common human sympathy, but this action on his part could not but impress me as most kind and humane.

" Coming not many years later to reside

in Boston, I heard many of his lectures. There was a certain ethereal quality about him which made me regard him as almost a disembodied man.

"I first visited the Emerson house on the occasion of an anti-slavery tea party given at the Town Hall in Concord, Mass. The speakers on this occasion were Wendell Phillips, Edmund Quincy, and the elder William Lloyd Garrison. Later in the evening, a few friends were entertained at the Emerson residence. It seemed almost grotesque to see its master waiting upon his guests, which he seemed to do with right good-will. His wife, stately and mild-eyed, appeared perhaps more remote from common life than he did.

"In company with the distinguished trio already mentioned, I had been invited to remain at the house overnight. Our return train did not leave until early afternoon, and our forenoon was passed in Mr. Emerson's library, and in his delightful company. We were seated around a table, with our host at one end and Mrs. E. at the other. Many themes of interest were discussed, Mrs. E. fully expressing her opinions, which often did not coincide with those of her husband. She was tall of stature and grave of aspect, dressing simply, but in good taste, her invariable coiffure being a cap of lace or muslin, garnished on either side with a sprig of forget-me-

nots, whose color well-matched that of her eyes.

"Although simple in their style of living, the Emerson couple were very hospitable, and entertained many people. I think that one of the husband's maxims was: 'Defend your mornings,' but, the day's study over, he did the honors of his table with a grace all his own."

In the volume entitled "The Genius and Character of Emerson," edited by F. B. Sanborn, Mrs. Howe has an article on "Emerson's Relations to Society," which gives us what is perhaps the most complete picture we possess, of the social side of Emerson's life, with the exception of that portrayed by his son Edward Emerson in his volume, "Emerson in Concord." The article is full of interesting information and insight. Mrs. Howe writes:

"There were many years of Emerson's life in which his words and works were valued by only a very small number of people, and in which he himself was welcome in only limited social and literary circles. Even the recognized literary men of the time paid him little attention.

"I remember having myself, been sharply called to account for advising an acquaintance to attend the first course of lectures which he gave in New York. In those days and long after, Cambridge held him in doubt-



ful and supercilious consideration. The world of fashion only in rare instances knew enough of him even to laugh at him.

"I cannot follow here the steps by which he came to stand where we all remember him later, in conceded eminence, as first in rank among our men of letters. We all know that each of these steps was brave, true, and independent. Clad in his wonderful temperament as in a seraph's golden armor, Mr. Emerson reviewed the forces of his time, showing neither fear nor favor to what he found amiss. Nothing did he set down in malice, nor aught extenuate.

"The tardiness of Mr. Emerson's attainment of the recognition to which he was entitled is easily explained by the fact that he, like some of his peers, had to teach a new valuation to the community which assumed to judge him. Certain forms of belief, of reasoning, of expression, had in the minds of men become so hardened, that the fossilized community had become incapable of entertaining a new idea.

"Mr. Emerson was not the only person sent to blow up these coral reefs; but he wrought at them alone, because his manner of work was, above all, individual. His was the secret of a subtle solvent which changed enmity into friendship, and the titter of ridicule into the pean of manly praise. Not the secret of base compliance this, but the

finding of that deepest truth within whose domain all must agree.

"The perfect politeness of Mr. Emerson's attitude in regard to society appears as much in what I remember of his life, as in his works. A great element of caution, a great sensitiveness to the rights and desires of others, sometimes made him a waiter where others dashed headlong into the fight. He was instinctively averse to strife. Keeping in mind this characteristic of his mind, we must the more admire the unsparing frankness of his satire.

"So much of his thought and life was cast in forms of immortal beauty, that it endures and will endure for generations that never heard his voice nor saw his smile,—a joy and an inheritance forever."

## EMERSON AND DANIEL WEBSTER

I find in Emerson's Journals forty-one references to Daniel Webster, which is more than to any other man in political life.

Webster was an eminent Massachusetts statesman and constitutional lawyer, who represented his state for many years in the National Congress,—first in the House of Representatives, and afterwards in the Senate,—and who served as Secretary of State under three Presidents. As his home was in Boston during many years, acquaintance and friendship sprang up between him and Emerson, who admired his great ability and for many years supported him in his political aspirations and ambitions.

Webster did several things in his public career for which Emerson always gave him great credit and honor. One was his opposition to the war with Mexico and his declaration that we had no right to rob her of her territory. Another was his support of Kossuth's struggle for the freedom of Hungary. A third was his long continued and powerful effort to create a public sentiment throughout the country in favor of the permanence and soundness of the National Union,—an effort which found its most elo-

quent and memorable expression in his great speech in the United States Senate in reply to the Senator from South Carolina. The fourth was his opposition to slavery, not only as economically injurious to the nation, but as a gross moral evil, and a crime against humanity.

During Webster's earlier career, up to 1850, he maintained this strong opposition to Slavery. Then, to the amazement and dismay of his friends and supporters, he delivered his famous Seventh of March Speech, in which, notwithstanding his avowal to the contrary, he seemed to abandon his former principles, and virtually to array himself on the side of the South and slavery. The crucial matters at stake were the Fugitive Slave Law and the extension of slavery to new territory. First, should the evil institution of slavery, complacently accepted in the South, compel the North to enter into partnership with it? In other words, should it be allowed to extend its iron hand over the free North and compel officials in the Northern States to arrest fugitive slaves and forcibly return them to bondage? Should slavery be allowed to enter and blight the vast new territories of the West which would soon knock for entrance into the Union as new states?

To both these questions Webster in his Seventh of March Speech was everywhere understood virtually to answer "Yes."

In that speech Webster claimed that the South had a constitutional right to maintain slavery at home, in the states where it already existed; that there was nothing in the national constitution forbidding this. This part of his speech was not greatly resented. But when he went on to consent, seemingly, to the surrender of the whole nation, present and future, to the curse of human bondage,—that roused not only the abolition party, but nearly the whole North, as nothing connected with the slavery controversy had ever done. His Massachusetts constituency were shocked. It seemed to them that he had turned traitor, not only to his country's best interests, but to his own record.

Nobody felt the shock more than Emerson. He had stood by Webster; he had trusted him. True, he had not been blind to certain limitations, certain regrettable defects in his private character; but he had considered his public career high and honorable, shaped wholly in the interest of what he sincerely regarded the Nation's welfare; and had believed that, as regards slavery, he could be relied on to oppose it in every legitimate way, and especially to be a rock in opposition to its further extension within the national domain. But now all was changed. Alas ! how had the mighty fallen !

Garrison, Phillips, Theodore Parker and others lashed him with words of fire. Even

the gentle Whittier wrotes his terrible  
"Ichabod" :

"So fallen ! so lost ! the light withdrawn  
    which once he wore !  
The glory from his gray hairs gone  
    Forevermore !  
Reville him not, the Tempter hath  
    A snare for all ;  
And pitying tears, not scorn and wrath,  
    Befit his fall.  
Let not the land once proud of him  
    Insult him now,  
Nor brand with deeper shame his dim  
    Dishonored brow.  
But let its humbled sons, instead,  
    From sea to lake,  
A long lament, as for the dead,  
    In sadness make.  
And pay the reverence of old days  
    To his dead form ;  
Walk backward, with averted gaze,  
    And hide the shame."

Emerson wanted to be gentle so far as possible, as well as just, to the man whom in the past he had so highly honored and praised. But he could not justify the Fugitive Slave Law ; he must speak and write against it. He could not justify opening the vast territories of the West and Southwest ; he must condemn it. At the same time he did not forget the great and fine things that this friend had done in the past. His admiration and his criticism of Webster are both expressed in this entry in his Journal :

“ Could Mr. Webster have given himself fully, unselfishly and until final victory came, to the cause of the abolition of slavery in Congress, he would have been the darling of this continent, of all the youth, of all the virtue, of all the genius in America. Had an angel whispered to him, ‘ Fling yourself on the principle of freedom, resolve to live and die for it, no matter how much men frown and bluster,’ —the tears of love and joy and pride of the whole world would have been his.”

Two or three days after Webster's death Emerson made this record in his Journal : “ Last Sunday I was at Plymouth on the beach, and looked across the hazy water—whose spray was blowing on the hills and orchards—to Marshfield, the home of one of New England's greatest sons. I supposed that he, who had long been the master of that home, had passed, as, indeed, he had died at three in the morning. The sea, the rocks, the woods, gave no sign that America and the world had lost the completest man; Nature had not in our days, or since Napoleon, cut out such a masterpiece. He was a statesman, and not the mere semblance of one. Most of our statesmen are in their places by luck, and not by any fitness. Webster was there for cause; the reality; the final person. But alas ! he was the victim of his ambition; to please the South he betrayed the North ! and he was thrown out by both.”

## EMERSON AND "FATHER TAYLOR"

At first sight, perhaps, not one of all the friendships of Emerson seems so unexpected and almost unaccountable as that with the famous Methodist "Sailor Preacher" of Boston. This remarkable person was born in Richmond, Virginia, of parents the poorest of the poor. At seven years of age he ran away to sea, where for ten years he experienced all the hardships of life on a second class sailing vessel. During those years the ways of sailors, the language of sailors, and the spirit of the sea became a part of his very nature; so that, although the rest of his life was spent on land, he remained at heart always a sailor and a friend of sailors.

When he left the sea he could not read; but this he soon learned to do. Being of a deeply religious nature, it was not long before he experienced what the Methodists called "conversion," and joined that church. This opened for him the door to his life work. Becoming at once zealous in religious activities, it was soon apparent that he had remarkable gifts as a public speaker. He was appointed by his denomination an evangelist to the sailors along the New England coast, and sent to Boston to establish a sailor's church. Here he soon became acquainted



with Emerson, who at that time was a Boston minister. Emerson was attracted by the sincerity of the man and became interested in his mission.

From the first, the two men understood each other and believed in each other in spite of the radical differences between them in theological viewpoint and in social and educational background. In these matters the two could hardly have been farther apart; one a Unitarian, the other a Methodist; one belonging to the most cultured literary and social group of Boston, the other a common sailor, unlettered and more or less uncouth in speech and manner. But both were too genuine and too big of soul to let these things interfere with their high regard for one another's character and ideals; for each instinctively recognized the other's quality.

When Taylor felt the need of building a chapel for his seamen's mission, he went at once to Emerson for suggestions and help, and both Emerson and Dr. Channing assisted him to secure funds and interested prominent Boston merchants in his cause.

In a letter published in the biography of Father Taylor, Mrs. Horace Mann, writing to Taylor's daughter, says, "Your father did not agree with Emerson's views of the Lord's Supper, but he declared that Emerson was more like Jesus Christ than any man he had ever known."

We are fortunate in having a description of Father Taylor's preaching by Emerson himself. In his Journal of January 6, 1835, he wrote of having gone to Boston (he was then living in Concord) to attend Father Taylor's service in his Seamen's Chapel. He described Taylor's "praying God for his servants of the brine, to favor commerce, to bless the bleached sail, the white foam, and through commerce to christianize the universe. 'May every deck,' he said, 'be stamped by the hallowed feet of goodly captains, and the first watch and the second watch be watchful for the Divine Light.' He thanked God that he had not been in heaven for the last twenty-five years,—then indeed had he been a dwarf in grace, but now he had his redeemed souls around him. And so he went on,—this poet of the sailor and of Ann Street,—fusing all the rude hearts of his auditory with the heat of his own love. He is a fine study to the metaphysician or the life-philosopher. He is profuse of himself; he never remembers the looking-glass. They are foolish who fear that notice will spoil him; they never made him and such as they cannot unmake him. He is a real man of strong nature, and noblest, richest lines on his countenance. He is a work of the same hand that made Demosthenes and Shakespeare and Burns, and is guided by instincts diviner than rules. His whole discourse is a string of auda-

cious felicities harmonized by a spirit of joyful love. Everybody is cheered and exalted by him. He is a living man and explains at once what Whitefield and Fox and Father Moody were to their audiences, by the total infusion of his own soul into his assembly, and consequent absolute dominion over them. How puny, how cowardly other preachers look by the side of this preaching ! ”

An old sailor describes Father Taylor's preaching as follows : “ When a man is a-preachin' at me, I want him to take som'ut hot out of his heart and shove it into mine,—that's what I call preachin'.” That was what Father Taylor did to his sailor boys. Edward Everett described him as “ a walking Bethel.” It was said of him that in his great moments he could make his sailors feel the ship alive under them, and the saltness of the sea, as he strode the quarter-deck. He could describe a storm and create such peril by his magic that there were times when the old salts would lose track of Sunday in the Bethel and shout “ *Long boat ! Out with the long boat ! Be ready to cast her loose !* ” Then he would turn his vision to their soul's peril and cry out to them to be saved. He could say stern things to them, too, when he thought there was need ; but he would allow no other man to do it in his presence or in his Bethel.

In June 1845 Emerson made the following

comment in his Journal regarding a visit which Father Taylor made to Concord. "It was a pleasure yesterday to hear Father Taylor preach all day to our country church. Men are always interested in a man, and the various extremes of our village society were for once brought together. Black and white, poet and grocer, contractor and lumberman, Methodists and preachers, all joined with the regular congregation in rare union."

It was said that Father Taylor knew personally all the sailors in all the coast cities of New England and called them all by their given names, or the names used in their ships. They were all his boys. They loved him as a father, and he loved them as his children. When they landed in Boston from any voyage, long or short, made to any part of the world, they at once directed their steps toward Father Taylor's Bethel, where they knew they would find a warm welcome.

Father Taylor was the one preacher in Boston that absolutely everybody wanted to hear,—high, low, members of churches, men and women who belonged to no church. The Governor was often seen in his audience; so were Harvard professors and many other leading people of Boston and Cambridge. His fame spread so that visitors to the city did not want to miss hearing him. When Jenny Lind came to Boston to give her concerts, she

specially stipulated, "I must hear Father Taylor."

But the listeners he cared most about were his sailor lads. His biographer tells us that when outsiders crowded the chapel on Sunday so that his sailors could not find seats, he would say to this man or that, no matter if a millionaire or the mayor of Boston,— "You will please stand, sir. Jack must have a seat."

His personality was impressive, strong, winning, but wholly unconventional. One felt his sincerity and genuineness and the warmth of his nature the moment one came into his presence. His eloquence was wonderful. He knew little about books but he knew the human heart; in that knowledge lay his power. Emerson declared that Father Taylor and Daniel Webster were the only persons in America who had reached the highest ideal of oratory.

If Emerson esteemed and loved Father Taylor, Father Taylor no less sincerely loved and esteemed him in return.

There were times when the sailor-preacher was sorely troubled by his famous friend's heretical religious views. He once said, "I think Emerson is the sweetest soul God ever made, but he knows no more about theology than Balaam's ass knew about Hebrew grammar. There seems to be a screw loose in him somewhere; and yet I have never been able

to find it; listen as I may I find no jar in his machinery. If the devil gets him he will not know what to do with him."

At one time some orthodox preacher was reported as saying that Emerson when he died would go to hell; it got into the papers and was much talked about. Father Taylor, hearing it, was indignant, and shaking his mane, like a roused lion, exclaimed, "Emerson in hell ! that good man ! Why, he would change the climate, and turn the tide of emigration that way."

## EMERSON AND MONCURE CONWAY

One has only to read Moncure Conway's book, "Emerson at Home and Abroad," to realize the deep reverence and affection he felt for Emerson. One of the chapters gives an interesting account of his first visit to Emerson, when he was a young student and Emerson a mature and famous scholar and author. "My note of introduction was presented" he writes, "and my welcome was cordial. Emerson was apparently yet young; he was tall, slender, of light complexion; his step was elastic, his manners easy and simple; and his voice at once relieved me of the trembling with which I stood before him, the first great man I had ever seen. He proposed to take me on a walk; and while he was preparing, I had the opportunity of looking about the library. Over the mantel hung an excellent copy of Michael Angelo's *Parcae*; on it there were two statuettes of Goethe, of whom also there were two engraved pictures on the walls. Afterwards Emerson showed me eight or ten portraits of Goethe which he had collected. The next in favour was Dante, of whom he had all the known likenesses, including several photographs of the mask of Dante, made at Ravenna. Besides portraits of Shakespeare, Montaigne and

Swedenborg, I remember nothing else on the walls of the library. The book-shelves were well filled with select works, among which I was struck with the many curious Oriental productions, some in Sanskrit. He had also many editions, in Greek and English, of Plato, which had been carefully read and marked. The furniture of the room was antique and simple. There were, on one side of the room, four considerable shelves completely occupied by his manuscripts; of which there were enough, one might suppose, to have furnished a hundred volumes instead of the seven which, at that time, he had gives to the world."

Emerson took Conway for a walk to Walden Pond, where they rowed, bathed and talked. The account continues "When we had bathed, we sat down on the shore; and there, Walden and her beautiful woods began to utter, their poems through his lips. Emerson's conversation was different from that of any other person I have ever met with and unequalled by that of anyone unless it be Thomas Carlyle. Agassiz, as I have heard him say, prefers Emerson's conversation on scientific questions to that of any other person. I remember Emerson that day at Walden as Bunyan's Pilgrim might have remembered the Interpreter."

Moncure Conway was the son of a slave-holding Virginia planter. He had graduated



from a Southern college and served for a time as a Methodist minister. But, largely through the influence of Emerson's writings, he had turned away from belief in orthodox theology and embraced liberal views of religion. To seek suggestions as to the course he should pursue after this change in viewpoint, he went to see Emerson and was advised by him to take a course of study at the Harvard Divinity School. This he did and afterward entered the Unitarian ministry.

He held short pastorates of Unitarian churches in Washington and Cincinnati, but was obliged to give up both on account of his strong opposition to slavery. When the Civil War broke out he went to England to support the cause of the North, preached and lectured widely, and finally accepted the pastorate of the liberal and famous South Place Church, Finsbury, London. There for twenty-three years he had a distinguished career as a leader of advanced social and religious thought. After leaving the South Place pulpit he devoted himself to literary work—partly in England, partly in America—, writing many books, among them biographies of Emerson, Hawthorne, Carlyle and Thomas Paine.

During the period of Moncure Conway's Divinity School studies at Harvard he saw much of Emerson, going frequently to Concord for talks with him, making it a rule always to hear him when he lectured in

Concord, Boston, or anywhere within reach, and more than once combining with other students to bring him to Harvard. In an article published in *The Critic* (New York) after Emerson's death, Conway relates an anecdote of his Harvard days that is particularly interesting for the light it throws on Emerson's character.

"During my student days at Harvard" he says, "hearing that Emerson was to lecture in Concord on a certain evening, several of us went there in a sleigh. It was twenty miles away and we must return the same night, but the sleighing was good, though the weather was bad. We found the Concord Town Hall dark, and, on inquiry at Emerson's house, learned that the lecture was postponed. Emerson was touched that in such weather young men should make a journey of forty miles, with the necessity of rising betimes next day, to listen to his lecture. He and his wife detained us with utmost hospitality and gave us refreshments; and after listening to his conversation we went off, toward the close of the evening, with a sense of happiest disappointment. No public lecture could have surpassed in charm that evening in Emerson's library.

"But Emerson, with his characteristic humility, was unconscious of the riches his conversation had bestowed, and thought only of our disappointment at hearing no lecture

after our long drive on the snow. Consequently he soon after wrote me that if I could arrange an afternoon he would read a lecture in my room. . . . Besides the students who had gone to Concord, I invited other friends, and there were present Mr. and Mrs. Henry W. Longfellow, J. R. Lowell, Mrs. Charles Lowell, Charles Norton and five or six others, including the musical artist, Otto Dresel. The effect of the essay was certainly "electric." It was as epical episode that we should be gathered around this man who fulfilled before us one of his sentences, 'In poetry we require miracles.' When Emerson finished there was a deep silence; presently Otto Dresel moved to the piano and performed several of Mendelssohn's 'Song without Words.' That appeared to be the only comment possible."

During one or two of his college summer-vacations Conway took rooms in Concord for the sake of being nearer to Emerson and thus being able to see more of him, for he felt that the inspiration he might receive would be invaluable. Conway himself thus tells the story :

"In the vacation I found a room to lodge in at Concord. Emerson had offered to lend me books and to give me suggestions as to reading; though, indeed, what I most desired was to study his own works and to be as much as possible in his presence. His mornings I

always held sacred, but it was his custom to take a walk in the afternoon, and he invited me to go with him on these. I was fearful about this also, for I knew he loved solitude, but he promised that if he desired to be alone he would let me know. Two or three times every week I went to walk with him. Once or twice I thought I observed a doubt in his face, and so I proposed to take his children on a boating or other excursion; for I had already been accepted by them as a comrade."

As result of such companionship with Emerson and the devotion with which he listened to all that the great man said, Conway was able, when writing about Emerson later, to give very illuminating pictures of his character and habits of thought and of action. He declares that Emerson's mission was to individual minds, not to masses of men; that he did not like to deal with people in general but was always keen to recognize the particular talent or need of anyone who came into personal contact with him. He was the friend of souls.

Emerson liked to talk with humble workmen,—those laboring from time to time, on his own small farm, and others in the neighborhood. Many a lesson did he learn from them. True, he was meanwhile farming invisible acres above their heads; but, all the same, he was interested to learn from

them the secrets of terrestrial farming and gardening.

"Emerson's garb," says Conway, "was not rustic, except on some of his tramps; it was plain, never smart, and, with his homely speech and simple manners, he did not find the country-folk shy. He kept up good relations with all purveyors of real facts and real experiences, however humble. They were richly rewarded when the day came for Emerson to lecture in the Town Hall, when many a farmer saw his own prosaic facts rising to stars and shining in wonderful constellations he had never dreamed of.

"What a day was that when Emerson's lecture came on ! Remembering what Longfellow had told me about those sophisticated Bostonians whose faces were as extinguished lamps when listening to Emerson's early lectures, I have remarked the contrast when, with illuminated countenances, his villagers and farmers were gathered before him in Concord. They knew his voice and followed him. All the sermons in the village churches for a year were not so well remembered as some of his sentences. It has seemed to me that Emerson never spoke so well elsewhere as to his Concord audience. When I first heard him there he appeared, as he arose, to be, himself, the very type of New England farmer,—so plain in dress and so thoroughly standing on his own feet. Ere long he was un-

sheathed, and we were all in the hall of Pericles in Athens. It was then that I really heard Emerson; it was one of the most vivid experiences of my life,—it is impossible to describe it. I recall no gesture, only an occasional swaying forward of the body by an impulse of earnestness. Though nearly every word had been written, the manuscript did not hold his eye, which kept its magnetic play on the audience. One was not the same man after such an experience ! ”

Conway points out that there was in Emerson a rich vein of humor but it was quiet and unobtrusive, whether in his conversation, his public speech, or his writings. “ I have often,” he says, “ noted the omission from a printed essay of some sally which elicited, when spoken, much mirth; I think he was inclined to suspect any passage which had excited laughter. Humorous passages, spoken by Emerson, came from him gently, little wayside surprises, without any air of intention to excite laughter. One of his wittiest lectures was that on the French; it was full of racy anecdotes derived from his sojourn in Paris during the Revolution of 1848. But it was never published, though delivered in Philadelphia to a great audience.”

Conway notes that Emerson liked to talk upon religion, but not theology or anything controversial. His religious talk was always earnest, but never dogmatic. He liked to

discuss life's ideals with young men. He always advised them, above everything, to stand on their own feet, to be themselves according to their own best judgment and highest aspirations. Although Emerson himself had left the pulpit, Conway says he never knew him to dissuade any young man from entering it, if he was earnest and desired to use his life for noble ends. To one such, just ordained, Emerson wrote : " Go bravely on ; we seniors will hope and expect from you faithful years and the fulfillment of high promises."

There are many evidences of the high regard in which Emerson held Moncure Conway. Among others is this letter of introduction given him to carry to Alexander Ireland, of Manchester, England, when Conway went over during the Civil War to try to influence English public opinion in favor of emancipation of the slaves and the preservation of the Union of our States.

" My Dear Mr. Ireland,

Mr. Moncure D. Conway, a valued friend of mine and a man full of public and private virtues, is just now going to England, having, as I understand him, both inward and outward provocation to defend the cause of America there. I can assure you, out of much knowledge, that he is very competent to do this duty. He is a man of excellent ability in speaking and writing, and I grudge to spare his usefulness at home, even for a contingency so important as the correcting of opinion in England."

Many years later Mr. Ireland wrote :

"I consider it due to my friend, Mr. Conway, to publish this letter of introduction which he brought to me from Emerson in 1863."

He adds,

"Mr. Conway's abilities and acquirements have secured for him since that time a very large circle of friends in London, which includes many of our most distinguished men and women of letters, and artists."

The friendship of Moncure Conway for Emerson was that of a young man who becomes a beloved disciple of one older and wiser. "I was just twenty-one years of age when I first met him," writes Conway, looking back on the beginnings of that discipleship, "and often since, reflecting how crude I was, his patience and kindness have been remembered by me with grateful emotion." Emerson was slightly past fifty at the time of that meeting, and the friendship, begun then, lasted nearly thirty years,—until Emerson's death at the age of almost eighty.



## EMERSON AND ALEXANDER IRELAND

The friendship of Emerson and Alexander Ireland began when Emerson was in Scotland in 1833, and the personal contacts of the two men were all made on that side of the Atlantic,—Mr. Ireland never having visited America as Emerson repeatedly urged him to do. The acquaintance, begun during Emerson's first visit to the British Isles, soon ripened into a warm affection which continued until Emerson's death.

To Alexander Ireland more than to anyone else, not excepting Carlyle, Emerson owed the invitations he later received to visit England as a lecturer, and it was Ireland who arranged all the details of the lecture engagements and looked after Emerson's comfort in every way.

In a little volume which Alexander Ireland published shortly after Emerson's death, containing his recollections of his American friend, he gives an interesting account of his first meeting with the young visitor from across the Atlantic.

"It was in the month of August, 1833," he writes, "that I had the singular good fortune to make the acquaintance of Mr. Emerson, and to enjoy the privilege of several days' intercourse with him. I was then re-

siding in Edinburgh, my native city, and he was on his way home, at the end of his first visit to Europe. He had with him a letter of introduction to a friend of mine who, luckily for me, was so much engaged in professional duties that he was unable to spare even a few hours to do the honors of the old Scottish metropolis; so the young American traveller was handed over to me, and I thus became an 'entertainer of angels unaware.'

"In those days Mr. Emerson was about thirty years of age and his name was unknown to the world of letters; for the period to which I refer was anterior, by several years, to the delivery of those remarkable addresses which took by surprise the most thoughtful of his countrymen as well as of cultivated English readers. Neither had he published any of those essays which afterwards stamped him as the most original thinker America had produced. ,

"On Sunday, the 18th of August, 1833, I heard him deliver a discourse in the Unitarian Chapel, Young Street, Edinburgh, and I remember distinctly the effect which it produced on his hearers. It is almost needless to say that nothing like it had ever been heard by them before, and many of them did not know what to make of it. The originality of his thoughts, the consummate beauty of the language in which they were clothed, the calm dignity of his bearing, the absence of all

oratorical effort, and the singular directness and simplicity of his manner, free from the least shadow of dogmatic assumption, made a deep impression on me. . . . His voice was the sweetest, the most winning and penetrating of any I ever heard; nothing like it have I listened to since.

"We visited together the courts of law and other places of interest to strangers and ascended Blackford Hill which commands a fine view of the city. There were thus good opportunities for conversation. He spoke on many subjects connected with life, society, and literature, and with an affluence of thought and fulness of knowledge which surprised and delighted me. I had never before met with anyone of so fine and varied culture, and with such frank sincerity of speech; and it was with a feeling almost akin to reverence that I listened to and drank in his high thoughts and ripe wisdom. 'It was not, therefore, extraordinary that the impression produced on me was intense and powerful.'"

After leaving Edinburgh, Emerson wished to seek out Carlyle, whose acquaintance he was anxious to make, and Mr. Ireland was of assistance to him in this.

As result of the deep impression on Alexander Ireland by Emerson's address in Edinburgh, he determined to get him back later for a series of lectures in the cities of

England. In the Fall of 1847 he and Carlyle finally persuaded Emerson to consent to this plan, though they had to overcome considerable hesitation on his part. "I feel no call," he said, "to make a visit of literary propagandism to England. All my impulses of that kind would rather employ me at home." He modestly doubted whether the British public knew him well enough through his writings to care about hearing him lecture. However, when he arrived in England he found not only the lecture engagements already arranged for him by Mr. Ireland but new applications for his lectures coming from all parts of the Kingdom.

Mr. Ireland, besides making lecture engagements for him and otherwise assisting him, travelled with him to some extent. In London he seems to have spent several weeks with him, doing much to show him places and objects of interest in the city and helping him to meet eminent persons. During Emerson's entire stay in England, Mr. Ireland kept in touch with him by letter, messenger, telegraph and attended to forwarding his mail. Emerson wrote home at this time: "Alexander Ireland approves himself the king of all friends and helpful agents; the most active, unweariable, imperturbable."

The correspondence between the two continued after Emerson's return to America. In the following letter, written several years

later, we see how warm the friendship still remains :

Concord, April 26, 1869.

"Dear Mr. Ireland,

Unless I knew your generosity I should hesitate to write you after this too long silence. But now I have two commanding motives which break down my chronic and constitutional reluctance to letter-writing. In the first place, a pretty good acquaintance with your brave book, which you were so kind as to send me.\* I have read much in this pleasant book of justice and love, and willingly join in the general thanks of scholars to you for this work of loyalty and good taste so thoroughly and accurately performed that it will be prized by lovers of Lamb, Hazlitt and Hunt now and hereafter. My second motive for taking my pen today is that my friends, Mr. and Mrs. Fields, who know so many of your English friends but have never seen yourself, are departing in a couple of days for England and France and Switzerland and I desire to make it certain that you and they shall meet. You and they have many good qualities in eminent good-will and helpfulness to me. If it is possible, I hope that Mrs. Fields and Mrs. Ireland may meet, and that I may have new information to add to all I drew from the valued photograph you sent me. I should like to see you and your Manchester home again, you and your household; and I should like to know the history of many of those who surrounded you in 1847-48 when I was with you. All your friends have been ours, and I wish you will keep them so. But one duty you have left undone, which is to make a visit to these States; and I shall expect you till you come. Be assured that you shall find a hearty welcome in this house.

Yours ever affectionately,  
R. W. Emerson."

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\*Bibliographical List of the Writings of Charles Lamb, William Hazlitt and Leigh Hunt.

When Emerson made his third visit to England, in 1872-73, he found Mr. Ireland the same true friend and helper that he had been in the two earlier visits. In a note to him sent from Edinburgh, Emerson writes : " My best thanks for your affectionate care for me and mine. My daughter, Ellen, tells me that we shall arrive in Manchester at 5:20 from the Lakes and that we will stay with you till Wednesday. Continue, I pray you, your loving kindness to me and mine. With my greetings to Mrs. Ireland,—"

This third visit to Europe proved Emerson's last. The final days before sailing for America he spent with Mr. and Mrs. Ireland in their home. With the same thoughtfulness that Alexander Ireland had always shown during each of Emerson's visits to England, he arranged to bring together, to meet Emerson and his daughter, many of his friends and hearers of earlier visits.

After Emerson's death in 1882, Alexander Ireland published in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Liverpool, Manchester, and London, a small memorial volume which contained, not only his own personal recollections of Emerson, but also an admirable sketch of his life and extracts from letters of his that had not previously been published.

## EMERSON AND THOMAS CARLYLE

Perhaps the most remarkable as well as the most famous of the friendships of Emerson was that with Thomas Carlyle. This friendship attracted much attention during the lives of the two men; but after their death it became known still more widely through their remarkable published correspondence,—a correspondence which began when Emerson was only thirty-one, very soon after his first visit to England,—and continued forty-seven years until Carlyle's death in 1881. After the death of Emerson, in 1882, the correspondence was edited by his distinguished friend, Charles Eliot Norton, and published\* in two volumes.

Emerson's personal acquaintance with Carlyle began during his first visit to England in 1833. Their correspondence started the following year. At that time Carlyle was little known even in England and less still in America. Articles from his pen on Burns, Voltaire, German Literature and other literary subjects, had appeared in the English and Scotch quarterly Reviews. These articles had attracted the attention of a few friends

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\* The Correspondence of Thomas Carlyle and Ralph Waldo Emerson, Houghton, Mifflin & Co., Boston.

there. Emerson had read them and had been greatly impressed by them. They were something fresh, different, strongly and thrillingly alive. He recognized at once that a new and commanding voice in literature had spoken. He must know more of it; he must know the man from whom it came.

The story of his visit to Carlyle, at Craigenputtock, amid the bleak hills and moors of Scotland, is one of the most interesting in modern literature. Two days after Emerson's departure, Carlyle wrote to his mother : " A great happiness has befallen me. It was the arrival of a certain young unknown friend, named Emerson, from Boston, in the United States, who turned aside from his British, French and Italian travels to see me here ! He had an introduction from John Stuart Mill, and from a Frenchman whom Mill knew at Rome. Of course we could 'do no other than welcome him; the rather, as he seemed to be one of the most lovable creatures, in himself, we had ever looked on. He stayed till next day with us, and talked and heard talk to his heart's content, and left us all really sad to part with him. Jane (Mrs. Carlyle) says it is the first journey, since Noah's deluge, undertaken to Craigenputtock for such a purpose. In any case, we had a cheerful day from it, and ought to be thankful."

A week later Emerson wrote to a friend



(Mr. Alexander Ireland), an account of his visit, in which he said: "I found him (Carlyle) one of the most simple and frank of men, and became acquainted with him at once. We walked over several miles of hills and talked upon all the great questions that interest us most. The comfort of meeting such a man is that he speaks sincerely; that he feels himself to be so rich that he is above meanness of pretending to knowledge which he has not, and Carlyle does not pretend to have solved the great problems, but rather to be an observer of this evolution as it goes forward in the world. . . . He talks finely, seems to love the broad Scotch, and I loved him very much at once."

Twenty-three years later (in his "English Traits") Emerson again and more fully describes this visit to Carlyle: "From Edinburgh I went to the Highlands. On my return I came from Glasgow to Dunfreed, where I inquired for Craigenputtock. It was a farm sixteen miles distant. I found the house amid desolate, heathery hills, where the lonely scholar nourished his mighty heart. . . He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow, self-possessed, and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish; full of lively anecdote and with a teeming humor which floated everything he looked upon. His talk, playfully exalting the

most familiar objects, put the companion at once into an acquaintance with his Lares and Lemures. Few were the objects and lonely the man, 'not a person to speak to within sixteen miles,' except the minister at Dunscore; so that books inevitably made his topics. . . . When too much praise of any genius annoyed him, he professed hugely to admire the talent shown by his pig. He had spent much time and contrivance in confining the poor beast to one inclosure in his pen; but pig, by great strokes of judgment, had found out how to let boards down, and thus had foiled him. . . . He was already turning his eyes toward London. London is the heart of the world, he said. He liked the huge machine. In London the baker's boy brings muffins to the window at a fixed hour every day, and that is all that a Londoner knows or wishes to know on the subject. But London turns out good men."

Such briefly were the beginnings of the friendship between Emerson and Carlyle. The friendship is portrayed best and with greatest fulness in the two volumes of published correspondence, mentioned above,—volumes which should be read by all who care really to understand these two great souls. The correspondence is remarkable for the many years it covers, extending throughout nearly the entire adult lives of the two men. In these letters are revealed with great frank-

ness the fundamental thoughts and ideas of two of the finest geniuses of the time; they contain many brilliant discussions of subjects of permanent interest, eagerly debated even in our own day.

Many intimate particulars about Emerson's personal life are revealed in what he writes to Carlyle, which are not to be found elsewhere. For example, in his letter of May 10, 1838, he describes his home and family : " I occupy two acres of God's earth, on which are my house, my kitchen-garden, my orchard of thirty young trees, and my empty barn. My house is now a very good one for comfort, and abounding in room. Besides my home, I have, I believe, \$22,000, whose income in ordinary years is six per cent. I have no other tithe or glebe, except the income of my winter lectures, which was, last winter, \$8,000.00. Well, with this income, here at home, I am a rich man. . . . I have food, warmth, leisure, books, friends. Go away from home, I am rich no longer. I never have a dollar to spend on a fancy. . . . My wife, Lidian, is an incarnation of Christianity—I call her Asia—and keeps my philosophy from Antinomianism; my mother, wisest, mildest, most conservative of ladies, whose only exception to her universal preference for old things is her son; my boy a piece of love and sunshine, well worth my watching from morning to night;—these and three domestic

women, who cook and sew and run for us, make all my household. Here I sit and read and write."

Emerson was the first eminent literary man of either continent, to express publicly, in print, appreciation of Carlyle's first book, "Sartor Resartus." This strange work was written by Carlyle at Craigenputtock in 1831. It took two years for him to find a publisher for it, and then only in a periodical, *Frazer's Magazine*. As it appeared month after month, over there, Emerson in America, impressed with its originality and power, gathered the chapters together for publication in book form on this side the Atlantic. In 1836 the work appeared in Boston, and reached a sale which enabled Emerson to send to its author a hundred and fifty pounds. Not until two years after that was it issued in book form in England. Later Carlyle wrote Emerson : "A hundred and fifty pounds from over the salt sea, and not a sixpenny realized from the thing here in one's own country."

Carlyle's first really great book, his "French Revolution," was published, without much delay, in both England and America. Its American edition was due to Emerson, and its success here was largely owing to his praise of it.

Emerson regarded Carlyle as a very great conversationalist, as well as a great writer.

In "Lectures and Biographical Sketches" Emerson says of him: "He is an immense talker, as extraordinary in his conversation as in his writing,—I think even more so. He is not mainly a scholar, like the most of my acquaintances, but a practical Scotchman, such as you would find in any saddler's or iron-dealer's shop, and then accidentally and by a surprising addition, the admirable scholar and writer he is. If you would know precisely how he talks, just suppose Hugh Whalen (the gardener) had found leisure enough in addition to all his daily work to read Plato and Shakespeare, Augustine and Calvin, and, remaining Hugh Whalen all the time, should talk scornfully of all this nonsense of books that he had been bothered with, and you shall have just the tone and talk and laughter of Carlyle. I called him a trip-hammer with an Aeolian attachment."

Perhaps nothing gives a keener interest to the Carlyle-Emerson friendship than the fact that the two men were so radically unlike. They were almost at opposite poles from one another, in their literary style, in their physical and mental make-up, and in their social and political philosophies. Carlyle was thunder, lightning, and storm. Emerson was gentle rain and sunshine. Carlyle was a mountain torrent, swift, dashing against rocks, leaping over precipices in mighty cataracts, but, withall, deigning, in a measure, to be

harnessed and drive useful machinery. Emerson was a wide, quiet, peaceful river, inviting all living things to allay their thirst in its fresh waters, reflecting the sky and all beautiful objects in the mirror of its surface, and bearing rich freight on its broad bosom. How was it possible for men so different to attract each other so strongly and so enduringly? For their friendship seems to have been grounded in a real and indestructible affection. Doubtless the explanation was, in part, the fine genius, the high intellectual qualities, which each recognized and greatly admired in the other, as, also, the sincerity and moral courage which each possessed in so marked a degree and which was a bond of understanding and sympathy between them. Perhaps, too, in the strong contrast of their personalities, there lay a mutual attraction.

Emerson and Carlyle, in their letters, did a good deal of fencing, with some pretty sharp thrusts and hard blows, but neither ever winced nor complained. With perfect sportsmanship each could praise the other's skill even when directed against an idea, a habit or even a literary work of his own. Thus we find Carlyle writing to Charles Eliot Norton under date of September 26, 1864 (Letter CLIII of the Carlyle-Emerson Correspondence) : " I have a letter received from him (Emerson) and though there were few words in it that did not give me pain, it says the only

thing that has been said about my book ("Frederick the Great") that was worth saying; and therefore, when I had read it through, I wrapped it up in a piece of paper and put it inside the book, and there it will stay till I am dead and it will fall into other hands than mine."

Emerson was a staunch believer in democracy; Carlyle was an Imperialist. Emerson was by nature and philosophy an optimist; Carlyle was a pessimist, partly, no doubt, as result of his dyspepsia but also, seemingly, by innate disposition. He not only saw the dark side of the world but constantly dwelt upon it, often cynically, if not despairingly. Emerson, while recognizing that dark side, looked through it to the light that he always saw beyond the gloom.

As Carlyle advanced in years he grew more and more dogmatic, more and more pessimistic, scolded more, was more and more a worshipper of force. Also his dyspepsia grew worse,—which Emerson was kind hearted enough to believe was to a considerable degree the cause of his friend's deterioration of mind and temper. Emerson put up with it all as best he could; sometimes reproved it,—most frequently with gentleness, but occasionally with words which hit harder. Carlyle growled and stormed in reply but, knowing the staunch and loyal friendship behind the rebuke, his wrath was short-lived.

Finally death put an end to a friendship which nothing else had been able to seriously disturb. Carlyle, seven years older than Emerson, died first, but only a year later Emerson also passed away.



## EMERSON AND JOHN STERLING

Emerson had several very highly prized English friends with whom he carried on a somewhat extensive correspondence, which has been published. The most important of these were Carlyle, Arthur Hugh Clough, Alexander Ireland and John Sterling. The correspondence with Carlyle is well-known; but that with each of the other three is quite as fine in literary and spiritual quality, and they reveal the real Emerson, the deeper Emerson, better than do his letters to Carlyle. The other three men were really closer to Emerson in spirit, in their aims and ideals and in their whole philosophy of life than was the great thunder-and-lightning denouncer of shams, hypocrisies and wrongs.

John Sterling was a fascinating character. He was introduced to Emerson by Carlyle, who had fallen in love with him,—which was no wonder, for everybody did. Emerson never met Sterling personally, but, becoming acquainted with his work and character through Carlyle and, a little later, through some of Sterling's own writings, he recognized him as a kindred spirit and opened correspondence with him,—a correspondence which continued until Sterling's too early death. How highly Emerson valued this gifted soul

and his friendship is evidenced by the fact that Edward Emerson, after his father's death, published the letters in a little volume, introducing them by an appreciative account of his father's friend.

John Sterling was of good Scotch-Irish ancestry. His father was a leading writer for the *London Times*. The son received his University training in Glasgow and Cambridge. Being uncertain what calling in life to choose, he tested both law and business but did not find satisfaction in either. He considered a political career but decided that his uncertain health would not justify this. Having a deeply religious nature, he was urged by friends to become a clergyman of the Church of England. After some hesitation, he "took orders" and became a curate. Into his new calling, particularly its practical work among the poor, he threw himself with all his soul and made himself deeply beloved by a large multitude who long remembered him as the best friend they ever had. But he presently balked at the theological teaching of the Church. He could not honestly join in the creeds and the liturgies nor in the belief that the Bible in all its parts is the infallible Word of God. What should he do? Suppress his convictions? Give his people to understand that he believed what he really did not? This he could not do. Much as he loved the real religion of Christianity, its ethical and spiri-

tual teachings and its service of others, he felt constrained to leave the ministry of the church and take up some line of activity in which he would not be required to be false to his own convictions.

He turned to a literary career, which had always possessed a fascination for him. In this he found happiness, writing for *The Athenaeum*, producing a novel, a drama, short stories, and many short poems. But it soon became evident that his literary career could be only a short one; tuberculosis had fastened itself upon him. For a few brief years he moved from place to place, seeking a favorable climate,—in the South of France, in the West Indies, and in the Isle of Wight. But in vain. He died at the early age of thirty-nine.

Carlyle characterized him as “the brilliant, beautiful and cheerful Sterling, with his over-flowing wealth of ideas, fancies, imaginations; with his frank affections, inexhaustible hopes, audacities, activities, and general radiant vivacity of heart and intelligence; which made the presence of him an illumination and inspiration wherever he went.”

Dr. Edward Emerson thus comments on his father's friendship for Sterling: “Sterling and my father never met face to face, but there was so strong a likeness in some parts of their lives—both the events and the spiritual experience—that their friendship seemed

ordained above. Both men were born with a commanding call to letters; both were brought under the awakening influences that moved England, Old and New, in their generation; both were influenced by Coleridge and charmed by Wordsworth; both earnestly hoped to serve their fellow men by work in the church in which they found themselves; both, after a short service there, found their growth resisted by the walls around them, and, as a consequence, both passed fearlessly out of the church, partial to work in the church universal."

The affection Emerson felt for Sterling is revealed in these sentences from one of his letters to his English friend: "I am a worshipper of friendship and cannot find any other good equal to it. As soon as a man pronounces the words which approve him fit for that great office—he is holy. Let me be holy also. Our relations are eternal."

As Sterling lay on his death-bed, not long before the end, a very precious letter came to him from his American friend. "However, the event is to fall" wrote Emerson, "God send you, my dear brother, the perfect mind of truth and heart of love. Thousands of hearts have owed to you the finest mystic influences of their lives. I shall continue to hope to see your face. I love you, dear friend !

R. WALDO EMERSON."

Sterling had strength to answer :—

“ My Dear Friend,

You and I will never meet in this world. Heaven help you to realize all your aspirations. My struggle is nigh over. I fear nothing and hope much.

Affectionately,  
John Sterling.”

## EMERSON AND ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

After Emerson's return from his second visit to England, in 1847-48, he wrote, "I think the most real benefit I have had from my English visits is forming the acquaintance of Clough. I have a new friend and the world has a new poet."

Clough was a young teacher in Oxford. He had passed through the Rugby School under Dr. Arnold, with high honors. Then as a student at Oxford, he graduated from Balliol College and won a fellowship in Oriel. When Emerson met him he was teaching at Oriel College and was recognized as one of its ablest men.

It was Clough who first invited Emerson to visit Oxford and was instrumental in bringing him there. He had read some of Emerson's earlier writings and been greatly impressed by them. Learning that the author had come to England and was lecturing in Liverpool (where Clough had a sister living), he made bold to write him.

"Mr. R. W. Emerson,  
Dear Sir,

My sister, who has had the pleasure of meeting you in my friend, Mr. B's house, emboldens me take what otherwise I should consider an unwarrantable liberty.

But Oxford may perhaps have some interest for you.

Our University has not perhaps a very large influence in the world of letters and learning, but it has, even now, a good deal to do with the thinking and doings of the upper classes; and, at any rate, it has a good deal of character of its own.

If you would think it worth while to visit the place, it would give me great pleasure to show it you. I have resided here some years and am a Fellow and Tutor at Oriel College; so that I may account myself qualified as a cicerone.

Your name is not a thing unknown to us. There are many here who have read and studied your books, and not a few who have largely learned from them and would gladly welcome their author.

At any time (except in vacation) any notice of your coming would find me prepared to show you all the hospitality in my power.

Yours respectfully,  
A. H. Clough."

To this letter Emerson wrote a cordial reply, saying that he would be very glad to accept Mr. Clough's invitation as soon as his engagements would permit. When, accordingly, the visit, later, took place, Emerson was greatly attracted to Clough, finding in him a brave, sincere truth-seeker who had thought his way out from what he regarded the superstition and bondage of the theology which was held by the Established Church. His religious views had come to be very liberal but he manifested no antagonism toward the religious communion that he had left behind him. Clough showed him Oxford, as he had promised; introduced him to professors and

students, (with several of whom he formed lasting friendships); and in every way made his visit a happy one.

Emerson sailed from Liverpool to return to America, Clough accompanying him to the ship. The two paced the deck together, conversing, until she sailed. Saddened by his American friend's departure, he exclaimed : " You leave all of us young Englishmen without a leader. We looked to Carlyle; but he has led us into the desert and has left us there." Emerson answered : " That is what all young men in England have confessed to me. I ordain you Bishop of all England, to go up and down among all the young men and lead them into the promised land." Clough caught his meaning and felt that Emerson was calling upon him to become the prophet of a daring, constructive, positive faith that could build anew after Carlyle's purging denunciations of the old and false.

Clough's liberal convictions brought him to feel out of place in High Church Oxford. He went to London and became for a time Professor of English Language and Literature in University College.

In June, 1852, he wrote Emerson : " My stipend in my present position amounts to some thirty pounds a year. Meantime, I am as good, or bad, as engaged to be married. Is there any chance, do you think, of earning bread and water, if not bread and flesh, any-



where between the Atlantic and the Mississippi, by teaching Latin, Greek or English? Will you tell me also what people of decent habits think it possible in New England to marry 'upon?' "

He received from Emerson, the following reply: "I am delighted to hear from you and cheered by the suggestion of your American hegira. I dare not advise you, but gladly answer your questions. There is always teaching to be done, to any extent and at all prices. As for expenses, of which you inquire, country ministers live and marry on five, six, seven, eight and nine hundred dollars. Country lawyers and doctors do not often make more. After a little consideration I will send you more details.

"Meantime I will make you a proposition, a serious bargain. Do you take the first ship or steamer for Boston; come out and spend two or three months here in my house. I will defend you from all outsiders. You shall look about you, have good milk, eggs, coffee, and not-so-good-as-English mutton. And you shall, on your part, answer a catechism of details touching England, revise my notes on that country and sponge out my blunders. Hawthorne, Thoreau and Channing are all within a mile of me."

A little later Emerson wrote him further: "My wife and my children and some good neighbors are made happy by the expectation

of quickly seeing you. Your chamber is all ready."

In October, he came,—Emerson receiving him warmly. He did not think it wise to accept Emerson's friendly invitation to be his guest for two or three months, but after a visit of some days, took lodgings in Cambridge, where he resided during his stay of eight months in America. He very soon had pupils to tutor in Greek and later a class in Ethics. His friends procured for him opportunities of writing for *The North American Review* and *Putnam's Magazine*. Presently Little, Brown & Co., of Boston, engaged him to revise the Dryden translation of Plutarch's Lives.

Meanwhile he was shown great attention on every side. Emerson gave a dinner in his honor at the Tremont Hotel in Boston, at which he met the leading literary men of Eastern Massachusetts. Lowell arranged a supper for him, at which Webster and Dana told stories and Clough "played the part of a good listener." There was an evening of theatricals at the home of Charles Eliot Norton, and Clough pleased everybody with an epilogue which he had written.

Early the next July (1853), Clough suddenly returned to England to accept a position offered him in the Government Education office, London, with what he regarded as a living salary, three hundred pounds a year. This was something of a disappointment to

his American friends, especially to Emerson; though they acknowledged that from his own standpoint it was probably wise. Soon after his return to England he married. Thereafter, until his death, he enjoyed a happy home life; faithfully fulfilled his duties at the Education office, with a reasonable degree of enjoyment; found some time for literary production; and kept up his correspondence with Emerson. He died at the early age of forty-two.

Clough's literary work was partly in prose and partly in poetry, the latter being the more important. He produced three long poems and a small volume of short poems. His longest poem, "The Bothie," was highly praised by a small, select circle in England, and by some of the leading literary men of the United States, including Emerson, Longfellow, Lowell and Charles Eliot Norton.

After his death Lowell wrote of him : " We have the foreboding that Clough, imperfect as he was in many respects, and dying before he had subdued his sensitive temperament to the requirements of his art, will be thought, a hundred years hence, to have been the truest expression in verse of the moral and intellectual tendencies, the doubt and struggle toward settled convictions, of the period in which he lived."

Those who knew Clough best felt that, fine as some of his poetical work was, he him-

self was better and greater than anything that he had written. This was Emerson's judgment concerning him. Clough had a large circle of devoted friends who, while they recognized in him, as they believed, a spark of real poetical genius, admired in him above all a character which, for sincerity, purity, courage and honor, had no superior. It was his high, brave spirit that so attracted Emerson.

## BRIEF CHRONOLOGICAL TABLE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS IN EMERSON'S LIFE

	Date	Age
Born in Boston,	May 25, 1803	
Entered Harvard College,	1817	14 Yrs.
Student at Cambridge Divinity School,	1825	22 "
Accepts Pastorate of Second Unitarian Church, Boston,	1826	23 "
Married Ellen Tucker,	1829	26 "
Wife died,	1831	28 "
Resigned from the Ministry,	1832	29 "
First visit to Europe, beginning of friendship with Carlyle and other British Authors,	1832	29 "
Established his Home in Concord,	1833	30 "
Married Lydia Jackson	1835	32 "
Delivered his Phi Beta Kappa address at Har- vard, on "The American Scholar,"	1837	34 "
Published "Nature,"	1836	33 "
Delivered "Divinity School Address,"	1838	35 "
Publication of "Essays, First Series,"	1841	38 "
Death of his son Waldo	1842	39 "
Publication of "Essays, Second Series,"	1844	41 "
Lectured widely in the Eastern States,	1835 to 1847	
Second visit to Europe; lectured in England and Scotland,	1847	44 "
Published first volume of Poems,	1847	
Lecture tour in the Western States,	1848	45 "
Publication of "Representative Men,"	1850	47 "
Publication of "English Traits,"	1856	53 "
"Saturday Club" started,	1856	53 "
(For the next 20 years Emerson seldom missed a meeting).		
Emerson appointed by President Lincoln a member of Board of Visitors to West Point; here he met John Burroughs,	1862	59 "

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Henry Thoreau died	1862	
Publication of "Conduct of Life,"	1860	57 "
Publication of "Society and Solitude,"	1870	67 "
His Home injured by Fire	1872	69 "
Third visit to Europe. Also visited Egypt,	1872	
Publication, of "Letters and Social Aims,"	1875	72 "
Died in Concord,	1882	79 "

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